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THE LIVES  
OF THE  
PRINCIPAL  
BENEDICTINE WRITERS  
OF THE  
CONGREGATION OF ST. MAUR:  
WITH  
AN HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.  
BY  
CHARLES MCCARTHY.



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## PREFACE.

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ONE CLASS—it has well been said—deserves, another enjoys, Fame.

So has it been with the Benedictines within these islands. Famous abroad, the Savants of St. Maur are, by some strange caprice of Fortune, almost unknown, at home.

This fact, regarded either from a religious, or simply from a literary, point of view, is alike a reproach to us. Of the three living languages of Europe—for there are *only* three, according to Goethe—German, French and English, shall the last alone take no cognisance of those “counsellors for the world,” whose lives were so nobly, yet so unostentatiously, devoted to the cause of moral and intellectual progress? Shall the waves of oblivion be allowed to roll unchecked over the foot-prints which these men have “left behind them, in the sands of time?”

X The following pages are an attempt, however

imperfect, to supply this omission; to give a practical answer to this question.

The Memoirs, which have been carefully prepared from the best authorities, are preceded by an Introduction in which various events of interest in the history of Monasticism and of the Benedictine order are successively reviewed. This review is necessarily brief. A complete history of this illustrious order would be a history of Christian civilisation itself; a work for which time and talent alike fail me:—

“Had I a tongue in eloquence as rich,  
As is the coloring in Fancy’s loom,  
T’were all too poor “——for an enterprise of  
“such pith and moment.”

I have, however, been careful to indicate the sources whence further information can be obtained, by those who may desire it, and I have devoted one chapter of the book to re-producing the opinions expressed, on the subject of these pages, by eminent men of almost every school of thought. These extracts will, it is hoped, tend to dissipate many prejudices, many “idola specus,” (as Lord Bacon terms them) which still prevent many well-meaning persons from judging, by the

broad light of Justice, both the Monks and the Church from whose prolific bosom they sprang.

Having thus briefly stated what the book is, perhaps I may be allowed to say what it is not.

It is not a panegyric.

“To gild refined gold” were a “wasteful and “ridiculous excess,” with which the Benedictines can well dispense. *Their* gold has been too long tried, in Time’s searching crucible, to need any such doubtful service, at mine or other hands.

But even the purest gold requires, as a condition of its durability, a certain measure of alloy, and the Benedictines, with their many merits, neither were nor claimed to be infallible.

I have therefore, endeavoured, in the following pages, to appreciate their deserts, with due distrust of my own judgment and with the unfeigned respect inspired by the memory of great things greatly done, of noble ends by noble means attained, but, at the same time, with all reasonable freedom, candour and impartiality. This it is which constitutes the charm of the Benedictine writings, their touching love of Truth above all

things, and their wondrous tact in telling the truth, without wounding Charity.

Less than this they ought not to receive; more, they would themselves be the first to reject, at our hands.

To them, as to the Church whose work they were, may well be applied the lines of Dryden's immortal poem :—

“For Truth has such a face and such a mien  
As to be loved needs only to be seen.”

LONDON, *November*, 1868.

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# CONTENTS.

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	PAGES
<b>MONASTICISM</b> :—its great antiquity ; is common to all the great historic nations, the Jews, the Persians, the Egyptians, the Indians, the Greeks and Romans. The various philosophic sects merely so many monastic orders. All still imperfect. Christianity alone can crown the edifice. Christian monasticism : its origin in the East, its progress in the West, its grand and final development by St. Benedict.....	1 to 12
<b>ST. BENEDICT</b> :—disastrous state of Europe at close of fifth century ; signs of ruin on all sides, invasions of the barbarians, perils of civilisation. St. Benedict appears and rolls back the tide of barbarism. His birth, life, labours, trials, achievements and death. Account of the Paschal controversy, and of the fall of Paganism .....	12 to 32
<b>THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT</b> :—its superiority over all others, its wisdom and practical good sense, to whom addressed, its objects and means. The Rule vindicated against the strictures of M. Guizot. Analysis of the Rule. Bossuet's opinion .....	32 to 41
<b>THE BENEDICTINE ORDER</b> :—its immense services to civilisation, both moral and material ; it cultivates the mind and reclaims the soil of Europe. Its progress traced in Italy, Sicily, Gaul, Britain, Spain and Germany. Undergoes a temporary eclipse, is restored by St. Benedict of Aniane. Account of Cluny and its abbots, Bernon, Odo, Aymard, Maieul, Odilon, Hugh and Peter the Venerable. Hospitality of Peter to Abelard : inference from it. Account of St. Bernard : birth, personal appearance and intellectual eminence of the Saint. From the quiet of his cell at Clairvaux, Bernard lays down the law to Europe. Importance of the Cistercians ; nothing great in the Church, without them. Great intellectual activity of the Benedictines, from the ninth to the fourteenth century. They are at once, the preservers of the past, and the historians of the present. Without them, all books, including the Bible, would have been irreparably lost. Proofs of this. Account of the monastic "Scriptorium," its solemn benediction by the Abbot ; form of prayer used ; care displayed in selecting only the most intelligent transcribers, none but the élite of the community admitted within the walls of the Scriptorium. Attention paid to binding books, Diploma of Charlemagne. Sporting monks. Opinions on this of Robertson and Maitland. Exit penman : enter printer. Faust, Schœfer and Caxton find their best patrons in the Benedictines.	
<b>THE "REFORMATION"</b> :—a monk rends the Church asunder : the Benedictines "rest and are thankful." Glorious revival of the seventeenth century .....	41 to 53

THE MONKS JUDGED BY FRIENDS AND FOES; OPINIONS OF:—	PAGES
Brucker .....	53-4
Gibbon .....	54
Voltaire .....	54
D'Alembert .....	55
Guizot .....	55
Warton .....	55-6
Dugald Stuart .....	56
Kemble .....	56-7
Neander .....	57
Leibnitz .....	57
Dunham .....	57-8
Maitland .....	58
Dr. Johnson .....	58
Mr. Stuart Mill .....	59
Adam Smith (who is refuted) .....	59-60
Wordsworth .....	61
Dr. Lingard .....	62
Lacordaire .....	62-63
M. Ozanam .....	63
Chateaubriand .....	64-5

PROTESTANT WRITERS FAVOURABLE TO THE MONKS who are named, but not quoted: Turner, Collier, Wood, Hearne, Drake, Browne, Willis, Hallam, &c. .... 57 to 58

POPE ST. GREGORY THE GREAT, is the first Monk who ascends the Papal throne: a noble type of monk and pontiff. His birth, pontificate, trials and triumphs. Gregory the "Spiritual conqueror of England" has left a name more glorious than that of Cæsar. Is tolerant in religion and liberal in politics: is the most learned of popes and one of the most voluminous of writers: is also one of the best abused. Sunshine and Shade. The tax that great men must pay. Gregory pays more than his share. A new assessment. Balance restored. John of Salisbury crosses the plane of the Gregorian luminary and attempts to intercept its rays. Too late. John ought to have risen 600 years before. Famous indictment against Gregory. Four Counts. Defence, Summing up and acquittal. Opinions of John of Salisbury, of Brucker, Hume, Gibbon, De Broglie, Thierry, Tiraboschi, Ozanam, Villemain, Fleury, Milman, Bayle, Berington, Remy Ceillier, John, the "Deacon," &c., &c. Gibbon's little blunder. Virgil, a preacher of the Gospel, pleases St. Paul and converts Constantine. .... 68 to 84

JOHN MABILLON, "the most illustrious of modern monks," birth, early life, "profession," delicate health, recovery. Account of St. Germain des Prés. Its history important, miraculous origin and great fame. Is besieged by the Normans: gallant defence by Eboles and his Monks. Stirring lines of Abbo, the Homer of this siege. Abbey attacked by other enemies, learned barbarians, "striking" arguments of the mediæval students, dangers of interposing in quarrels, quotation from "Hudibras." Close of the feudal and commencement of the artistic glories of the abbey. Mabillon enters the Abbey: the illustrious men he meets there, Ducange, Baluze, D'Herbelot, De Valois, Cotelier, Fleury, &c. Mabillon's various works and correspondence. Who wrote

the "Imitation." ? Opinions of Bellarmine and Mabillon. Both wrong. Present state of the controversy. Benedictine edition of the works of St. Augustin. Great theologico-literary controversy. Opinions on both sides. Mabillon takes no part in the discussion. The work is condemned by the Jesuits and approved by the Pope. The Benedictines and Jansenism. Mabillon is presented to the "Grand Monarque." Words of Le Tellier happily supplemented by Bossuet. Mabillon's "Diplomatica." Its great learning and importance. Interesting details. Mode of signing ancient documents. "Marksmen," extraordinary custom mentioned by Duncange. Kings who had not been to school. Objections. The Jesuits again. Boileau and "Brother" Horace. Mabillon's "Classical Tour." His discussion with Cardinal Bona. His admission as a member of the Academy of Inscriptions. De Rancé and his book. Sketch of De Rancé: startling contrasts, fearful fall and glorious rise. His book on the "Duties of the Monastic Life." Controversy with Mabillon. Two model disputants. Opinions on this subject of Bossuet, Chateaubriand, Fleury, and many others. Mabillon in the Catacombs. His work on "Unknown Saints," badly received in Rome, judged by Fléchier. Mabillon and the "Holy Tear of Vendôme;" controversy with Thiers. Account of Thiers, his "History of Wigs," &c. Mabillon's loyalty to the old Faith unjustly suspected. His opinion of Protestantism shared by two men of very different stamp, Bossuet and Gibbon. Mabillon's "Annals," its importance. His death. Estimate of his character and abilities .....

84 to 120

**BERNARD DE MONTFAUCON:** his birth, &c.; becomes a soldier, follows the flag of Turenne. Sheathes his sword and becomes a Benedictine monk. His attainments as a linguist. Importance of the Greek language. The book of "Judith." What are the "Canonical Books?" Montfaucon edits the works of St. Athanasius. This subject examined. Montfaucon visits Italy; his arrival in Milan, Modena, Mantua, Venice, and Rome. His reception at all these places. The Jesuits again! Opinion of Bossuet on the famous question of Grace and Free Will. Remarkable words of the Eagle of Meaux. "Orator" Henly, "damned to immortality" by Pope. Various other works of Montfaucon Reviewed. Was Pope Liberius a heretic? Several authorities quoted. Montfaucon's "Palæographia Græca." Its great importance. His edition of Origen's "Hexapla." Full details on this subject. Montfaucon's edition of Philo Judæus "De Vitâ Contemplativâ." Interest attached to this work. Were the Therapeutæ Jews or Christians? Christians, say Montfaucon and many others. Jews, say the best modern scholars. Montfaucon's "Antiquité Expliquée;" a colossal work, but now partially superseded. Death and estimate of Montfaucon .....

120 to 150

**JOHN LUKE D'ACHERY,** memoir and estimate of. His various works examined .....

151 to 168

**FRANCIS LAMI,** a philosopher, critic and graceful writer. Spinozism examined. Lami's refutation of Spinoza approved by Bossuet, Bayle and Voltaire. Difficulty of the problem raised by Pantheism. Two solutions. Merits of the Dualistic solution. Various other works of Lami .....

158 to 169



DENIS DE SAINTE MARTHE, Memoir of. His work on Confession. Its merits. On the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Remarks on Toleration. Sainte Marthes's "Life of Cassiodorus;" his best work. Examination of his "History of St. Gregory the Great." He amply vindicates the memory of the Pontiff, as regards his eulogy of Brunehaud; his account of the Pontiff's relations with the Emperor Phocas. Both these points examined and opinions of various historians quoted. Gregory does not appear to advantage, in the affair of Phocas. Sainte Marthe's "Gallia Christiana."	
OUR OLD FRIEND, JOHN OF SALISBURY, again. Account of him. John a great man and the friend of great men. His eminence in Church and State. His rank as a writer. Various authorities quoted. John is connected with the histories of England, France, Rome, and Ireland. His interviews with successive pontiffs. His candour. Tells the Pope "a bit of his mind." Assists at the Council of Lateran. Meets there St Laurence O'Toole. Visits Ireland. Memorable act of "Papal Aggression." An Englishman presents an English prince, in the name of an English pope, with an Irish Kingdom! England and Ireland wedded with a Roman ring. Happy marriage!	
DEATH AND ESTIMATE OF SAINTE MARTHE.....	170 to 183
EDMOND MARTHENE, Memoir, works and estimate of .....	183 to 187
THIERRI RUINART, memoir, works and estimate of. His account of the early martyrs. The Jesuits again. Terrible epithet. Has no terrors for Ruinart, who calmly pursues the "even tenor of his way." Gibbon and the Vandals, at home and abroad. Another of Gibbon's "little blunders." .....	187 to 193
AUGUSTIN CALMET, memoir, works and estimate of. Entertains a singular visitor. Voltaire and his three weeks' vow. The philosopher plunders the monk. Voltaire reads the Fathers. What he thought of them. His lines on Calmet. His correspondence with Pope Benedict XIV, &c. Account of Calmet's great "Dictionary of the Bible." Its merits and defects. Voltaire's opinion. Calmet's book on ghosts. "Angels and Ministers of grace defend us!" Ghosts very scarce now. As good as gone.	
CALMET'S LAST WORK. FINIS. ....	193 to 200

# THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF MONASTICISM.

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QUE REGIS IN TERRIS  
NOSTRI NON PLENA LABORIS ?

---

“ If a thing be poetically beautiful, in proportion to its antiquity, it is plain that Monasticism has some claims on our admiration. Its history can be traced back to the remotest periods. The prophet Elias, flying from the corruption of the world, retired to the banks of the Jordan, where, surrounded by a few disciples, he led a life of simplicity and self-denial. Without further ascending the stream of time, this origin of the Religious Orders seems to us a very striking fact. What would not the poets of Greece have said, had they been able to attribute the foundation of their sacred colleges to a man wrapped up to heaven in a fiery car, and who is destined to re-appear at the consummation of the world ?” (1)

The Greeks and other pagan nations, however, though unable to point to anything so “poetically beautiful,” as the Assumption of Elias, had also their monastic systems. “From the earliest ages, there were among the nations of the East, men who withdrew from the crowd, in order to live together in retreat. The Persians, the Egyptians, the Indians particularly, had their communities of Cœnobites;

(1) *Genie du Christianisme.*

“independently of those who were destined to the service of  
 “the altar ; such were the gymnosophists in India, such some  
 “philosophical sects among the Greeks, such the Pythagoreans  
 “in Italy and Greece, and the Therapeutæ in Egypt, and such  
 “probably were the first Christians who lived together apart  
 “from cities.” (1)

Thus all great religions, Jewish, Pagan and Christian, have had their monks, for we must remember that Christianity while it has re-formed has not formed humanity. It found before it priests, temples, sacrifices. All these it accepts. It destroys nothing, it perfects all things.

It is interesting to note this resemblance between philosophers and monks, between whom, we are now so often told that there lies a gulf wide as the world.

The ancients judged otherwise, and we therefore find the same names applied, by them, indifferently to both. Philosophers are styled monks, and *vice versa*.

The Pythagoreans are denominated “ascetics” and Origen, while recognising their claim to the title, points out the difference between them and the Christian ascetics. Both, he says, abstained from animal food, but from widely different motives ; the one class, on account of their doctrine of the metempsychosis ; the other, because they chose the royal road of the Cross, and desired to assure the triumph of the spirit over the flesh.(2) The term “ascetic” is used by various pagan writers in the sense of “philosopher”—by Arrian. (L. iii.) by Artemidorus (L. iv. c. 35) and by Vopiscus, in his life of Aurelian. St. Chrysostom, speaking of Monasticism, styles it “the philosophy introduced by Christ.”

(1) Voltaire, *Essai sur les Mœurs*, also *Diction. Philo. Art. Esséens*.

(2) Origen, *Cont. Cels.* lv. Diogenes Laertius mentions the same fact, in his life of Pythagoras, and says that the Pythagoreans had a community of goods, and regarded all men as equals and brothers, practised silence for whole years, and displayed the greatest humility, &c. Jamblicus calls the Pythagoreans “cenobites,” in *Vit. Pythag. c.v.*

(Hom. 17) The historian Sozomen also styles it a "divine philosophy." (1)

The Stoics perhaps exhibit a nearer approach to the perfection of religious life than the Pythagoreans. "Zeno's abstemiousness and the severity of his morality were famous amongst the ancients; his self-denial became proverbial. The monument to his memory, erected by the Athenians, at the request of King Antigonus, contained the noble line, "His precepts were mirrored in his life." (2)

Plato, that unbaptized Christian, "who wrote a human preface to the Gospel," (3) seems to have had a clear perception of the dignity and importance of the monastic state. His perfect man must have an insatiable desire of the knowledge of all real existence, must love truth and hate falsehood, must despise all material gratification, must disregard riches, must be high-minded and liberal, must practice justice, gentleness, and generosity, &c. Here we have, almost in as many words, the three great virtues,—poverty, chastity, and obedience—which form as it were the keystone in the arch of Monasticism. (4)

Passing from the Pagans to the Jews, we find the monastic spirit displayed in the lives of the Prophets, of the Nazarenes, the Rechabites, the Essenians, and Therapeutæ. (5)

(1) Hist. Ecc. L. I. C. 12, 13, 14. See on the same subject La Mothe le Vayer, Vertu des Payens, t. ix. Lipsius, Manuduct ad Philos. Stoic, L. iii. c. 13.

(2) Schwegler's History of Philosophy. "If I could ever forget that I am a Christian, I could not help regarding the destruction of the sect of Zeno as one of the calamities of the human race." Montesquieu, Esp. des Loix. L. xxiv, c. x.

(3) De Maistre's words. The Fathers from Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, to Augustin, seem to know no bounds in their admiration of Plato. By St. Augustin, he is almost canonized; see his Confessions, l. vii. c. 9. the Heavenly City passim; and mark the following towards the close: "I could have pardoned the Pagans, if instead of raising a temple to Cybele, they had raised a shrine to Plato, where his works should be read."

(4) Plato De Rep. L. vi. (5) See Bossuet Sermo. xv. Elev. 7, and Hist. Univ., 2nd Partie. ch. 2.

Bellarmino has examined this subject, with his usual diligence and learning. He divides the history of Monasticism into three epochs, viz.; that of the Natural

A wide difference, however, exists between the monks of Judaism, of Paganism, and those of Christianity.

Superior to all other codes of the pre-Christian period, the Mosaic law was itself essentially incomplete; "it brought nothing to perfection," as the Apostle tells us. (1) "A deep mystery," says Bossuet, "is signified by the exclusion of Moses from the Promised Land. This wise law-giver, who, after so many miracles, only conducts God's people to the borders of their future country, affords us, in his own person, the clearest proof of the imperfection of his law. . . It is a Josue, it is a Jesus, (for this was his real name,) who, both by his name and office, represented the Redeemer of the world. This man, in all things inferior to Moses, is yet superior to him by his name, and he is the destined instrument, in the hands of God, for bringing His people into the Holy Land." (2)

The Essenians and the Therapeutæ, despite their many virtues, their fastings, their charity, their chastity, were only the types and figures of the future, the shadows which coming events cast before them. Christianity alone could crown the edifice of Monasticism.

This observation applies, of course, with much greater force to the monastic institutions of paganism.

The Roman world is separated from Christian monasticism by three things: poverty, chastity, and obedience; poverty, in the midst of a society which was perishing from excessive wealth; chastity, in the midst of a society which

law, that of the Mosaic law, and that of the Christian dispensation. It is feeble in the first, stronger in the second, fully developed in the third.

See Bellarmine de Monach. C. V. There is now no doubt that the Essenians and Therapeutæ, were Jewish, not Christian monks, as held by many historians. I shall return to this subject when I come to speak of Montfaucon.

(1) Hebrew vii. 19.

(2) Hist. Univ. 2nd partie ch. iii. The name of Josue or Jesus was given by Moses himself in lieu of Osee, the name originally borne by Josue. (Numb. xiii, 17.)

was expiring in Bacchanalian orgies; obedience, in the midst of a society which was falling to pieces from disorder. Here was the secret of monastic strength as contrasted with Roman weakness.

Deeper still is the difference between Christian and Indian monasticism. The monks of India were poor, chaste, obedient, (1) but of two things they were profoundly ignorant. They laboured not, neither did they pray. Their lives were absorbed in endless revery and contemplation. As our great poet has it, "dreams were the stuff their lives were made of, and their little day was rounded with a sleep." By a kind of practical pantheism, God and man, the Creator and the creature, were blended mystically together. What need had such men of labour or prayer?

Christian monasticism, on the contrary, sanctified both. "To labour, not for oneself, not for one's wife or children, but to labour incessantly for a whole community; this is an effort which human nature does not readily make. The founders of the spiritual life asked those great sacrifices, this daily self-denial, only in the name of love. Such sublime devotion can only be attained by humility and charity, and these the Christian ascetics found in prayer." (2)

With the preaching of the Gospel, therefore, the history of monasticism proper begins, and hence it is that most writers on ecclesiastical subjects are content to claim for it no higher antiquity than that of Christianity itself. (3)

(1) The Cynics practised poverty in an eminent degree, and may be said to have been the first of the mendicant orders. Diogenes once begged of a statue "in order," said he, "to accustom himself to refusals." Doubtless, an excellent reason. See Diogenes Laertius, in vit. Philos.

(2) Ozanam, *Civilisation au Vme. siècle*.

(3) The learned Lucas Holstenius says: "Frustra sunt qui verum et perfectum Monachismum Christianismo vetustiore faciant: ejus in veteri testamento, figura magis quam forma, præsagia potiusquam exempla reperiuntur. Præf. ad Cod. Reg. Mon. He even thinks that we do not touch *terra firma* in this matter before the age of Constantine. See also Muratori's 65th Dissertation on the Antiquities of Italy. Helyot, *Hist. des Ordres Monastiques*, t. 1. Thomassin, *vet ac nova Eccles. Discip.* Pars 1. L. 1. c. 46 & 50.

"Whoever is acquainted with the spirit of the Gospel can have no doubt that the religious life is of Divine institution, since it consists essentially in practising two counsels of Jesus Christ, viz.: the renunciation of marriage and temporal possessions, and the embracing a state of perfect continence and poverty." (1) In these words, Fleury has expressed the almost unanimous opinion of ecclesiastical historians, of the Fathers, the Sovereign Pontiffs, as well as those of some Councils. (2) We trace, in ecclesiastical history, four distinct classes of religious, viz.: ascetics, hermits, or anchorets, monks and cœnobites. (3) All these names are of Greek parentage, and all attest the Eastern origin of monasticism. Each name also corresponds to a certain step in the progress of the spiritual life.

The first Christians were probably all ascetics, that is they were chiefly occupied in certain spiritual or corporal

(1) Fleury, 8me. Discours sur L'Hist. Eccles.

(2) Take the following from among many similar opinions; Baronius, the great Father of Ecclesiastical Annals, as Muratori styles him, thus expresses himself: "Joannem (Baptistam) jecisse vitæ monasticæ fundamenta Catholici omnes fatentur." Annal. ad an 31. St. Chrysostom styles it "The philosophy founded by Christ." Hom. 17. St. Jerome speaks constantly in his letters, in the same sense. Cassian says "Cœnobitarum disciplina a tempore predicationis apostolicæ sumsit exordium." Coll. xviii. 5. The Council of Thionville says: "Sacrum quoque monachorum ordinem a Deo inspiratum et ab ipsis Apostolis fundatum." Concil ad Theod. Vill, C. iii. That of Meaux employs similar language, Conc. Meld. C. ix. The learned Protestant writer, Bingham, says: "There were *always ascetics* in the Church, but not always monks," Christian Antiquities, L. vii. p. 328, Ed. Oxon. This distinction is admitted by some distinguished Catholic writers: see Pagi, Crit. in Bar., ad an 62 n. 4. Valesius, not in Euseb. L. ii. C. 17. Holstenius, Pref ad cod. Reg. Papebroch &c. I have already quoted Voltaire: it is interesting to note the opinion of another distinguished disciple of the same school, who is, however, perfectly orthodox on the subject of the monks. D'Alembert in his famous Encyclopédie writes thus: "Il y a toujours eu des Chrétiens qui, à l'imitation de St. Jean Baptiste, des prophètes & des Rechabites, se sont mis en solitude, pour vaquer uniquement à l'oraison, aux jeûnes, et aux autres exercices de vertu." Encyclop. Artic. Moine. See also an interesting passage in Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations, Book 3d. p. 202. For Scriptural authorities see the following, Matthew xix. 11, 12; Mark x. 21, 29, 30; Luke xviii. 18 & 22; Acts ii. 4, 4-5, iv. 32, et seq.

(3) "Ascetics" from Aschesis, labour or exercise; "Hermit" from *Eremus*, a desert; "Anchoret" from Anachoreo, to retire or withdraw from society; "Monk" from Monos, solitary ("Monachus, idest solus," Hieron, Ep. ad. Paulin 13), and "Cœnobite" from Koinos Bios, social

exercises, undertaken from a pious motive. Eusebius connects them, in a special manner, with St. Mark. (1)

Paul and Anthony were, according to St. Jerome, the first of hermits or anchorets, and Hilarion the first of monks. (2) Finally, in Pachomius, we find the founder of cœnobites, in which form Monasticism acquired its complete development. Here then, towards the close of the third century do we find the religious life assume a definitive and regular form.

The names of Paul, Anthony, and Pachomius, are for ever memorable in the monastic annals of the East, and at the mention of them, the majestic image of the Thebaid, with its vigils, its austerities, its labours and its prayers, rises before the mind's eye. Egypt, after having exhibited the spectacle of all the vices, was now destined to display that of all the virtues, of which humanity is capable. (3) For here, amid these burning sands, and beneath the shadow of those pyramids from whose summits so many ages of idolatry looked down on them, the humble solitaires laid, in humility, prayer, self-denial and labour, the foundations of an edifice destined to rival, in grandeur and solidity, even the gigantic

life, i.e. the life of a Community. To these may perhaps be added the Boskoi or "Graziers," who are praised by St. Ephrem, and described by Tillemont, *Mem. Eccles.* t. viii., and the Stylites or Pillarites, who are found in the East up to the 12th century, and occasionally in the West also. See Greg. Turon *Hist. Franc.* t. 1.

(1) *Hist. Eccles.* L. ii. C. 17. See Baron ad an 62. According to Eusebius, St. Mark was the founder of the Ascetics. (*loc. cit.*)

(2) *Hujus vitæ auctor Paulus, illustrator Antonius; et, ut ad superiora conscendam, princeps Joannes Baptista.*

Ep. 22. ad Eustoch.—*Nec quisquam monachos ante S. Hilarionem in Syria noverat.* S. Hieron, in vit. S. Hilar.

(3) L'Égypte, qui avait été le pays du monde le plus souillé par les abominations de l'idolâtrie, fut purifiée par les vertus des pieux solitaires. Bulteau, *Hist. de l'ordre de St. Benoît*, t. 1. In Egypt, (as Bossuet says) everything was God, except God himself, even cats and cabbages were adored there, and hence the Roman satirist observes :

O Sacras gentes! quorum nascuntur. in hortis Numina!

On the cat worship of Egypt see a curious account of a terrible tumult, at Alexandria, caused by the sacrilegious murder of a divine cat. *Diod. Sic.* L. I.



works of the Pharaohs. The efforts of these holy men were crowned with signal success and the "progress of the monks was not less rapid or universal than that of Christianity itself." (1)

The solitudes of the Thebaid were soon peopled by the crowds that rushed there to find a refuge against Roman tyranny, Roman corruption and barbarian violence. The persecutions of Decius gave a powerful impetus to this movement, but it must be admitted that great numbers also embraced the monastic life, simply from a desire of attaining to a higher degree of perfection. (2)

The lives of Anthony, Paul, Pachomius, &c., have been preserved to us by the pens of Saints Athanasius, Ephrem, and Jerome, and have been read with delight by successive generations. After the sacred volume, we shall probably look in vain for anything so touching, so edifying, so full of Apostolic unction and simplicity as these narratives.

"Who is there so ignorant and so unfortunate as not to have devoured these records of the golden age of monasticism? Who has not lovingly breathed the perfume of these wild flowers? Who has not considered, if not with the eyes of faith, at least with the admiration, inspired by an unmistakeable grandeur of soul, the contests of these heroes of penitence, and even the wondrous histories of those abandoned women, who, after having in vain tried to corrupt, proved themselves worthy to imitate and sometimes capable even of surpassing them by prodigies of repentance and holiness! One cannot tear himself away from these narratives. There is to be found everything, variety, pathos, sublimity united to the epic simplicity of a race of men guileless as children, but strong as giants.

(1) Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, C. 37.

(2) Paul was an instance of the first, Anthony of the second. See Bulteau, *Hist. de l'ordre de St. Benoit*, t. 1, and *vita S. Pachom*, in *vita Pat. ap. Ruwayde*: *Antonius magni Eliae atque Elisci necnon et Si Joannis Baptistae aemulator existens*.

"They have rendered the name of the Thebaid popular and immortal. They have exacted from the enemies of truth the homage of silence, and even in this age of moral feebleness and indecision, they have found eloquent panegyrists among the most illustrious and sincere writers of our own days." (1)

The next great historic figure that passes before us is that of St. Basil. "The fame of Basil" says Gibbon, "is immortal in the monastic history of the East." (2) He has been styled the "Christian Plato," and in him Monasticism beholds its first great legislator. His famous Rule, written about the middle of the 4th century, still continues to be the guiding code of Eastern monasticism.

About this time also we get a glimpse of the dawn of Western monasticism, the origin of which reads like an episode in the history of the great Arian Controversy.

In the year 340, St. Athanasius, flying, as St. Jerome says, from the persecutions of the Arians, arrives in Rome, where he finds repose and encouragement beneath the shadow of the Papacy. (3) The illustrious prelate is accompanied by two monks, Ammon and Isidore, and brings with him his famous life of St. Anthony. The cause of monasticism, in the West, is thus advanced by the double influence of precept and example, and the seeds sown by Athanasius are destined to bear abundant fruit. A critical interval, however, separates the period of seed time from that of harvest, and monasticism

Montalembert Moines d'Occident.

(1) These "Lives" have been collected by Fr. Rosweyde in his *Vitæ Patrum*. They have been lately republished by the Abbé Migne, *Cursus Completus Theologiae*.

(2) Decline and Fall, C. 37. Compare Bulteau, *Hist. de l'ord. de S. Ben. t.*  
1. La plus grande lumière qu'ait eu l'état monastique dans ce pays la.

(3) Baronius, ad an 340, says, *Quam vero proficuus fuerit Athanasii Romam accessus, vel ex eo potest intelligi, quod in urbem invexerit ipse primus Ægyptiorum monachorum institutionem, &c.* Muratori is of opinion that Western Monasticism is somewhat older than Baronius is willing to allow. See his 65 Dissertation on the Antiquities of Italy; also a striking passage in St. Augustin's Confessions, L. viii. C. 6.

has to contend at once with the pride and indifference of the Christians and the merciless raillery of the Pagans. (1)

Like Christianity itself, monasticism has to encounter the apathy of the great and the contempt of the learned ; and, like Christianity, it ends by completely conquering both. This primary difficulty once vanquished, the triumph of the religious life is definitively assured.

Three men, for ever illustrious in the history of the Church, contributed powerfully to this result. These were Saints Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustin. All have left us valuable works on the subject, and all have founded monasteries. (2) St. Jerome, in particular, was the preacher of this monastic crusade, and he may therefore fairly rank as the father of Western monasticism, as well as of Western Christian literature. (3)

Resting on these three great pillars, the edifice of the religious life, in the West, rapidly attained to completion, though not (as we shall presently see) to perfection. And here we note already one of the points of contrast between the Eastern and Western Monks. In the East, they belong as a rule, to the humbler classes ; in the West, they number, in their ranks, some of the noblest families of Imperial Rome. Roman patricians, and particularly Roman ladies, flung themselves into the movement, with all that strength, fervour, and intensity, which in every period of its history, in its grandeur,

(1) This is amply attested by St. Jerome, see Ep. ad Paulam, 22, and his letters generally : Salvian de Guber, Dei, L. viii. 4., and by the pagan poet Rutilius Numatianus.

(2) See St. Ambrose, De Virgin. Hexam. &c., St. Augustin, De Op. Monach. The Saint has also written a Rule, &c. St. Jerome is the reputed founder of the existing Monasteries of Palestine. The subject is constantly referred to in his writings. To these names I should add that of St. Martin of Tours.

(3) I allude to his famous translation of the Bible, a work which for ever fixed the Christian character of the Latin language. We need not, however, share Milman's exaggerated estimate that the Vulgate has rendered more important services to the Catholic Church than even the Papacy has done ! (Latin Christianity.) It is quite true that during the first four centuries not a single Pontiff of marked intellectual eminence had ascended the Chair of Peter. The roll of illustrious Popes opens with Leo the Great, A.D. 440. But St. Jerome had been himself the first to repudiate Milman's hyperbole.

and its decline, its virtues and its vices, amid patrician pride and plebeian liberty, had marked the Roman character. Fortunately for humanity it was so, for Rome was now menaced by a new danger, a new and fearful peril was at her gates. Already the tramp of the Scythian barbarians may be heard borne on the breeze, and the gleam of their camp-fires may be discerned from the summits of the Seven Hills. In vain does Rome send forth her once invincible legions, in vain does she try to rouse their enthusiasm by appealing to the thousand memories of her glorious past. All in vain; the hand has forgotten its *cunning*, the sword drops from the nerveless grasp of the soldier, and victory, so long chained to the Roman Eagles, now bids them a final farewell.

On come the ever advancing waves of the invaders, higher and higher still: the cry is, "still they come."

What shall Rome do in this supreme crisis of her fate, what refuge shall she find for her laws, her civilization, her religion? A refuge Rome shall find where she expects it not. Fresh troops are already pressing forward to re-occupy the various frontiers successively abandoned by the legions. Onwards rush the flower of Christian chivalry, bearing aloft that Sacred Standard which has never fled before the foe, and flinging themselves, as an impregnable rampart, between the menaced civilization of Rome, and the wild fury of the barbarians. The monks are face to face with the fierce hordes of Scythia. The eagles are trampled in the dust, but the Cross triumphs and Rome is saved. Saved in all that constituted her real grandeur, her arts, her sciences, her language, her literature, and her religion.

#### BABYLON,

Learned and wise hath perished utterly,  
Nor leaves her speech, one word to aid the sigh  
That would lament her; Memphis, Tyre are gone,  
With all their arts; but classic lore glides on!  
By these Religious saved for all posterity.

How these new but fearless soldiers rolled back the tide of barbarism, how they fought and conquered, in the glorious battle of humanity and civilization, under the guidance of the ablest of all their generals, it is the object of these pages to shew.

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### ST. BENEDICT.

THE close of the fifth century, marks one of the darkest and most calamitous periods in the history of our race. (1) The sun of Imperial Rome was setting amid all the signs of a vast social and political storm. The barbarians, those ministers of Divine vengeance, were thundering at the gates of Rome, and threatening to sweep away, as by a mighty wave, all traces of former civilization. At length, the Sceptre of the Cæsars drops from the nerveless grasp of Augustulus, and the invaders remain masters of the Eternal City.

Odoacer, chief of the Heruli revels in the palace of Augustulus, but only to be in turn dispossessed by Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths, A.D. 490. Thus we see that “con-  
“fusion, corruption, despair, and death were everywhere; the  
“dissolution of society seemed complete; one would have said  
“that authority, morals, laws, sciences, arts, religion herself,  
“had been condemned to irreparable ruin. The seeds of a  
“speedy and splendid restoration were as yet concealed from

(1) *Cum orbi natus est sanctus Benedictus miserabilis Europæ facies erat.* Mabillon, *Pref. ad Acta Sanct. ord. S. Bened.* See also Baronius, who draws a gloomy picture of Europe, ad. an 480.

all eyes, beneath the débris of a falling world." (1) The hands destined to sow these precious seeds were those of the great patriarch of Western Monachism.

About the year 480, amid the bracing air of Nursia, (2) in the modern duchy of Spoleto, was born of noble parents (3) a child, to whom was given the Latin name of Benedictus, or Blessed, as if in anticipation of the blessings of which he was to many the destined channel. Brought up in an atmosphere of the purest piety, and surrounded by all the sacred influences of home, the youthful Benedict gave early proofs of those holy dispositions, which afterwards culminated in the sublimest virtues, so that the Holy Spirit seemed to have taken up His abode in the child's breast. (4)

Rome, notwithstanding the various invasions of the barbarians, still maintained its ancient supremacy, as the seat of civilization and refinement. (5) To Rome therefore the youthful Benedict was taken by his parents, who (as in the case of Horace) appear to have accompanied him to the Eternal City.

(1) Montalembert, *Monks of the West*.

The sudden collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, is one of those great phenomena, the explanation of which has long occupied the attention of historians. To M. Guizot, however, is due the merit of having first fathomed this subject; no previous historian, not even Montesquieu or Gibbon had done so. The causes usually assigned are the despotism of the imperial government, the degradation of the people, the apathy of the governed; these causes no doubt contributed powerfully to the result; but they do not account for the whole of the facts, because, as M. Guizot remarks, they have existed elsewhere, without producing the same effects. What then was the immediate cause? This question M. Guizot has fully answered in his chapter on the "Curiales." As I cannot enter on the matter here, I must only refer the reader to the subject, in the "*Cours d'Histoire Moderne*," of the distinguished publicist.

(2) *Frigida Nursia*, Virg. *Æn.* L. vii. V. 715. The name occurs in Pliny, L. iii. 12.

(3) Some trace the Saint's genealogy to the illustrious Gens Anicia; others to the Emperor Justinian. Mabillon, however, seems to set but little value on such pedigrees. See *Acta Sanct. ord. S. Bened.* t. 1.; an interesting account of the Gens Anicia will be found in Gibbon, C. xxxi.

(4) *Ad modum domicilium sibi spiritus sanctus in ejus sacro pectusculo collocaverat.* Odo Clunic. *Sermo. de S. Ben.*

(5) Muratori says: *Et revera, peridem tempus (490,494) perdurabat adhuc in Italia, Scolarum usus et præsertim Romæ.* *Antiq. Ital. Diss.* 43.

The Roman schools, into one of which he was now introduced, were formed on essentially pagan models; and continued to be so many strongholds of the old and dying religion.

The pious but penetrating mind of Benedict soon perceived the hollowness of a teaching from which all life, liberty, patriotism, and religion had fled. He was also shocked by the dissolute lives of his companions, and fearing, says his illustrious biographer, Pope St. Gregory the Great, lest he too should be dragged down into the gulf of vice, he calmly and deliberately resolved to leave Rome, and devote himself to a life of piety and retirement. (1)

With only one companion, his old and faithful nurse, he bids farewell to the Eternal City (2)

His destination lay some forty miles east of Rome, through a region rich in scenic beauties, rendered still more beautiful by the sparkling waters in whose bosom they were reflected.

The traveller who leaves Rome, by the Via Tiburtina passes the classic ground of Tivoli, and wends his way along the gently undulating banks of the Teverone, finds himself in a delightful valley where seem blended all the richest elements of the picturesque, in a profusion that none but an Italian landscape knows. Pressing still further to the east, and

It was the age of Theodoric, of Boëtius, of Cassiodorus, of Ennodius. Theodoric, though he could not write his name, was a patron of the Muses, and we seem to behold in his barbarian court a kind of feeble reflection of the Augustan age. See on this subject, the letters of Cassiodorus passim; Paulus Diaconus *De Gestis Longobard*, L. iv. C. 22. Muratori *Rerum. Italic Script.* t. 1. and 23rd and 24th Dissertations on the Antiquities of Italy; also Tiraboschi, *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, t. iii. L. i.

(1) Many lives of St. Benedict have been written, but all we positively know of him is derived from that written by Pope Gregory I., and which forms the 2nd book of the Dialogues of the holy Pontiff. This is at once the earliest and best life of the Saint. The manners of the Roman youth, in the time of St. Benedict, do not appear to have differed much from those of the same class as previously described by St. Augustine, who tells, us in his Confessions, that they were the slaves of two passions, rarely united at that age—the love of pleasure and the love of money. “*Oderat enim istos cor meum, quamvis non perfecto otio. . . . Certe tamen turpes sunt tales et fornicantur abs te, amando volatica ludibria temporum et lucrum luteum.*” Conf. L. v. c. 12.

(2) *Nutrix quæ hunc arctius amabat sola secuta est.* S. Greg. Dial. II. 1.

ascending one of those pleasing heights which detach themselves from the great chain of the Appenines, he arrives at a group of ruins over which there seems still to float the aureole of a double consecration, classic and Christian. This was Benedict's destination ; the Sublaqueum of the Romans ; the Subiaco of the moderns. Pliny, in a few expressive words, has given us, at once, a description of the place and the etymology of the name : "Anio (now the Teverone) lacus tres, amenitate nobiles, qui nomen dedere Sublaceo, defert in Tiberim." (1) The lakes thus alluded to formed one of the sources from which Rome was supplied with water, by means of a vast aqueduct, the remains of which can still be seen. Waters of another kind were now destined to flow from the same source, bearing in their bosom, elements of a glorious fertility even to the remotest ends of the earth. (2)

Bossuet, in his eloquent panegyric of St. Benedict, and Butler in his life of the Saint, both describe Subiaco as a kind of howling wilderness. This appears to be a mistake.

One who knows it well, and whose visit, or rather pilgrimage, to the place, was evidently a labour of love, thus describes Subiaco. "This grand and beauteous site had "attracted the attention of Nero. He confined the water of "the Anio by dams, and constructed artificial lakes and baths "below, with a delicious villa which took, from its position, "the name of Sublaqueum, and of which some shapeless ruins "remain. He sometimes resided here. One day in the midst "of a feast, the cup which he raised to his lips was shattered "by lightning, and this omen filled his wretched soul with a "strange terror. Heaven seems to have set upon this place,

(1) Pliny, L. III.

(2) Baronius says : "Ex hoc uno, vera dicendo, sue humilitatis fonticulo, immensa flumina sunt derivata." *Annales*, ad an. 529.

A Benedictine colony was despatched in 1503 to America, by Alexander VI., almost immediately after the great discovery of Columbus. See Robertson's *History of America*.



“at the same time, the seal of its vengeance and its mercy. “Four centuries after Nero, and when silence and solitude had long replaced the imperial orgies, a young patrician flying from the delights and dangers of Rome sought here a refuge and communion with God.” And again, speaking of the “Sagro Speco, or grotto occupied by the saint, “The Christian “is to be pitied who has not seen this grotto, this desert, this “eagles and doves’ nest, or who having seen it, has not prostrated “himself, with respectful tenderness, before the sanctuary “from which issued the rule and the Institute of St. Benedict, the flower of Christian civilization, the permanent “victory of mind over matter, the intellectual emancipation “of Europe, and all that the spirit of sacrifice,” guided by Faith, can do to add grandeur and charm to learning, to labour, and to piety. (1) In this secluded grotto, unseen by all eyes, save God’s and those of a holy hermit, Romanus, the youthful Benedict lived during three years in the practice of the highest virtues. Years of peace and spiritual progress, years also of trials and struggles, in which, once at least, the resolution of the saint was well nigh vanquished. “*Patriæ quis exul se quoque fugit?*” Benedict had fled from his country, but could not fly from himself, and therefore, like St. Paul, St. Anthony, St. Jerome, St. Bernard, and other great saints, was destined to pay the penalty of being human. St. Gregory tells us how powerfully the imagination

(1) Montalembert, *Moines d’Occident*. Vol. 1.

This beautiful passage will remind the reader of Johnson, of his account of his visit to the ruins of Iona. Tacitus is referred to by Montalembert as his authority for the statement, that the festive cup was struck by lightning from Nero’s hands. The following are the words of the Roman historian: “*Nam quia decumbentis Neronis apud simbruina stagna, cui Sublaqueum nomen est lecta dapes, mensæ quo disjecta erat, &c.*”—*Annal.* XIV. 22. Nothing is said here about the accident to the cup; the fact, however, is mentioned by another historian (a Greek,) namely, Philostratus, in his *Life of Appolonius of Tyana*, l. IV. The fact is not improbable, though mentioned by Philostratus, whose love of the marvellous is so severely castigated by Dupin in his *Bibl. des Auteurs Ecclésiastiques*. The whole of the chapter in Tacitus is very obscure, and has badly puzzled the commentators.

of the young hermit was disturbed by the seductive vision of a Roman lady whom he had once met, and who appears to have made a deep impression on him. Benedict has therefore to fight his first (and, as the event proved, his last) great battle between the flesh and the spirit. The spirit conquered; but the battle was obstinate, and the victory for a time doubtful, so doubtful indeed that the saint was on the point of surrendering at discretion, and exchanging the gloom of his lonely grotto for the "delights and dangers" of Rome. Providence, however, had ruled it otherwise. Near the saint's grotto there lay a deep and tangled thicket of briars and brushwood, whose stunted arms, as they seemed twisted and interlaced, in all nature's wild luxuriance, appeared to forbid the entrance of any save of

"— those beetle things

That buzz to heaven with evening wings."

A dash in this thicket, at a critical moment, decided the victory, routed the flesh and the lady, and left Benedict in possession of a holy freedom which was never after disturbed. (1)

Benedict is generally supposed to have been at this time, about 14 or 15 years of age; though the incident just related would seem to point to a different conclusion. The silence of Pope Gregory, on the subject, is both remarkable and embarrassing. Baronius and Mabillon have examined the matter with great learning and ingenuity; but have arrived at different conclusions. It is therefore not probable that we shall ever escape from the region of conjecture on the subject.

St. Gregory tells us neither when Benedict was born nor when he died; who were his parents, when he left Rome,

(1) Ex quo tempore, sicut ipse postea perhibebat ita in eo est tentatio voluptatis edomita, ut tale aliquid in se minime sentiret. S. Greg. in vit S. Bened.

when he founded the famous Abbey of Monte Cassino, &c. On all these points the holy Pontiff, not having the fear of modern critics before his eyes, is entirely silent. This is the only *lacune* in a biography which is otherwise so remarkable for the extent and variety of its details, and which, above all, exhales, at every page, such a sweet odour of Apostolic candour and simplicity.

I am, of course, aware that there are not wanting writers who, both on account of what they contain and what they omit, have rejected the Dialogues, as alike unworthy of Gregory's fame. To this subject I shall return when I come to treat of the life and labours of this illustrious Pontiff. Here I shall merely observe that there is really not the slightest ground for treating these books as spurious. They are unmistakeably marked by Gregory's manner and style, and are frequently claimed by him as his own, in other parts of his works, the authenticity of which has never been questioned. (1)

These omissions, however, are rather matters of purely literary criticism, than facts which would prevent us from knowing the saint, how he lived and what he accomplished. On all these points we are furnished with the most ample details. Nor shall we be surprised to learn that Benedict was gifted with miraculous powers, though to many doubtless this will seem a hard saying. To the great Pope Gregory it

(1) On this see Mabillon, *Praef ad Acta Sanct. Ord. S. Ben.* t. 1.

Fleury, *Hist. Eccles. L. xxxv. C. 35.*

On the subject of Benedict's age, when he retired from Rome, I think (*pace tanti viri*) that Mabillon is more positive than the facts (such facts as we have) will warrant. He quotes several authorities, but they are *all long posterior* to Pope Gregory. Of what value, for instance, is the testimony of Odo of Cluny, who lived some 400 years after Gregory?

Here are Mabillon's words: "*Sancti Benedicti Secessus vulgo refertur ad annum cccxciv.; natiuitas vero ad annum cccclxxx . . . Sanctus Pater Benedictus adhuc puer eremum petiit, quidquid dicat Baronius, &c.*" Mabillon, *loc. cit.* Compare Baronius *Annal.* ad an 494.

The death of St. Benedict has been variously placed in 509, 531, 536, 542.

Mabillon rejects all these dates, and says the event could not have occurred before 543.

was not so, and need not be to us, without at the same time committing ourselves to *all* that is related, under the head of miracles, as the learned Benedictine, Sainte Marthe, observes in his life of the Pontiff. (1)

In 497, a neighbouring priest is sent by God to Benedict, with a command to supply the saint with suitable food. It was Easter Sunday, and the visitor on arriving at Benedict's cell, is surprised to find him observing a rigid fast. He is informed that it is the greatest of feasts, and that it is God's will that he should relax his severity and partake of His gifts. Benedict complies, and the two holy men pass the day in prayer and innocent recreation. It may surprise us too to find that the saint should have been ignorant of the return of the great Paschal solemnity. But we must remember his secluded life, and the difficulties which in the early ages of the Church, surrounded this matter.

The Paschal question was one that, from the very remotest times, disturbed the peace of the Church, which partly theological, partly astronomical, was differently interpreted in different places, and which it required all the authority of a General Council, all the learning of Alexandria, and all the influence of Rome to settle definitively.

As this is an important subject, and as it occupies a most prominent place in the early ecclesiastical annals of the British Isles, I may be permitted to advert to it briefly. The great Paschal solemnity constituted originally a point of contact, a kind of link between the Old and the New Dispensations. But while there were many features of resemblance, there were also some striking points of divergence.

(1) Writers on Miracles may be divided into three classes: those who believe nothing, those who believe something, and those who believe a great deal; in other words, into Sceptics, Protestants and Catholics.

The ablest representative of the first, is perhaps, Hume (*Essay on Miracles*); of the second, Dr. Arnold (*Lectures on Modern History*); and of the third, Dr. Newman (*Lectures on the present position of Catholics*). Dr. Newman's

The Jewish Passover was irrevocably fixed to a certain given day by the Mosaic Law. This was the 14th day of Nizam, the first month of Spring, which would correspond to our 1st of March. (1) The festival might thus fall indifferently on *any* day of the week. The Christians generally, on the other hand, in order to honor the day on which Christ rose from the dead, celebrated their Easter on the *Sunday* following. I say *generally*, because there were exceptions in certain churches, as for instance in those scattered through Mesopotamia, Syria, and Cilicia, which still adhered to the Jewish practice. (2) In vain did Pope Victor (3) launch at them the thunders of Rome. (4) They persisted in following their own system, hallowed, they alleged, by the example of the saintly Polycarp, and by a long prescription. A scandalous confusion was thus introduced into the bosom of the Church; different practices prevailed in different places, and while one was fasting another was feasting. (5) This state of things called aloud for reform, and the Council of Nice (A.D. 325) therefore drew up a Canon intended to bind the whole Christian world, and settle the dispute. It is there ordained that the Paschal solemnity shall invariably take place on the Sunday following the day fixed by Moses. (6) But here a fresh difficulty

exposé of the philosophy of miracles, is at once, complete, luminous and unanswerable.

(1) Exod. xii. 6 : Deut. xvi, 1.

(2) St. Athan, De Syn, Ar & Sel : Euseb. in vit. Constant. L. iii. C. 19, says, however, that Cilicia was among the number of those Churches which followed the Western custom.

(3) St. Victor was elected in 192, and filled the Papal chair during 10 years. He is named as an ecclesiastical writer, and a martyr by St Jerome, (De Vir Illust.) St. Irenæus and others think he was too sharp with the Asiatic churches but his conduct was approved at Nice.

(4) Euseb. Hist. eccl. L. v. C. 24.

(5) Euseb. in Vit. Corist. L. iii. 18.

(6) S. Epiph. Hær. L. lxx. C. 2. Eusebius (loc cit.) has preserved a letter addressed, by Constantine, to the Catholic bishops who were not present at Nice, explaining to them what had been done. The courtly Bishop of Cæsarea sees nothing irregular in a proceeding by which one who was not even a Christian arrogated to himself the right of addressing a kind of Encyclical to the prelates of the Catholic Church. Constantine, at the date of this letter, had not been baptized.

arose, what was the day thus fixed by the Jewish legislator ? To this question the Jews themselves were "from their imperfect acquaintance with the principles of astronomy, unable to give a satisfactory answer. Their calendar, like that of most Eastern nations, consisted of lunar months, and as these differed from solar months, it became most important that the exact relations between them should be distinctly pointed out. Here lay the great stumbling block of ancient astronomers, both Jews and Gentiles. To solve this problem" the Jews had recourse to intercalary days which they occasionally inserted, in order to escape from the difficulty which their ignorance had created. By this means, confusion became worse confounded, the Pasch took place, sometimes *before*, sometimes *after*, the Vernal Equinox, and it not unfrequently happened that they had *two* Paschs, instead of one, in a single year. (1) Here again the Church stepped in and authoritatively laid down the law, which is still observed by the whole Catholic world. The question was what lunation should serve to fix the Paschal solemnity ? That, says the Council, whose 14th day should coincide with, or follow next after the Vernal Equinox ; in other words, that Easter Sunday should be the first Sunday after the first full moon, after the Vernal Equinox. According to this Easter Sunday must always occur between the 22nd March and 25th April, inclusively.

Here then the question passed into the domain of astronomy, and as the clergy of Alexandria, the cradle of astronomical science, were very learned in this department of knowledge, the Council decided that the responsibility of making the calculations should devolve on the bishop of that see, who should, in turn, communicate the results of his labours to the Bishop of Rome, by whom as head of the Universal

(1) On the Calendar of the Jews and their hopeless efforts to reconcile lunar and solar months, see *L'Art de verifier les dates*. Paris, 1782. V. i.

Church, they would be proclaimed to the Christian world. (1)

To return, however, to St. Benedict. His solitude begins now to be disturbed. He is discovered by certain shepherds who, seeing him clothed in the skins of beasts, mistake him for a wild animal. They approach, and soon find, beneath this rough exterior, a gentle and tender soul. Benedict preaches to them, initiates them into the mysteries of the Christian religion (they were most probably Pagans) and leads them to a better and holier life. His fame spreads on all sides, many come to hear from his lips tidings of the world to come. Not a few lay gifts at his feet.

Among those thus attracted to his cell were certain monks from a neighbouring monastery, at Vico Varo, the Varo of Horace. They come and beg the hermit to assume the government of their monastery. Benedict, who sees beneath their habits, hearts swollen with the spirit of pride and disobedience, refuses to cast his pearls before such swine. The monks renew their importunity. Benedict yields a reluctant assent. The solitude of Subiaco is exchanged for the monastery of Vico Varo. Benedict had soon reason to regret his readiness in complying with the request of these deceitful solitaries. The seed which he planted fell upon a rocky soil. The history of his visit to Vico Varo is soon told. On the one side, vain attempts at reform; on the other stubborn resistance, which recoiled not even from the idea of crime. An attempt is made to poison the saint, who is saved only by a miracle.

These are sad facts to meet on the very threshold of Western Monasticism; but facts they are, attested by St. Benedict himself, in his rule, (ch. 1st.) and by St. Gregory the Great in his life of the Saint. When Christopher North

(1) Bucherius, *De cyclo pascali*, p. 481 : Tillemont, *conc. de Nicée*, t. vi. Hefele.

wrote. (1) "A monk is a monster," he probably had before his mind's eye monks of the Vico Varo type. If so, we certainly are not disposed to quarrel with the phrase. But it must be remembered that monsters of all kinds, whether in the natural or the moral order, belong rather to the exception than the rule. The failings, or it may be, the crimes of the few, only serve as a foil to set off the virtues of the many. "I do not dare pretend," says St. Augustin "to say that my house is better than the Ark of Noah, where "among eight men, one reprobate was found, or better than "the house of Abraham where it was said, 'Ejice ancillam "et filium ejus;' or better than the habitation of our Lord "Jesus Christ, in which eleven good men tolerated the thief "and traitor, Judas; or better than Heaven itself from which "the angels fell."

Six centuries after Benedict, the mantle of the Monks of Vico Varo seems to have appropriately fallen on the shoulders of the Cœnobites of Bretagne, and this fact constitutes one, perhaps the only, point of resemblance between the saint of Subiaco, and the philosopher of the Paraclet. (2)

Behold then the Saint once more in his cell at Subiaco. But he no longer belongs to himself; his light can no longer be hidden under a bushel, for his fame has travelled to the barbarians of Scandinavia, and the patricians of Imperial Rome.

Twelve monasteries are now founded, each consisting of twelve monks, subject to the guidance of a superior, and living by self imposed rule.

(1) *Noctes Ambrosianæ.*

(2) *O Quoties veneno me perdere tentaverunt! Sicut et in beato factum est Benedicto, &c. Abelard, Histor. Calamit. ap. Dom. Bouquet, Historiens de la France, t. xiv. p. 293.*

Compare the fate of De Rancé, the Reformer of La Trappe, as related by Chateaubriand. *Vie de Rancé.*



In these foundations we recognise the germs of those great Monastic establishments which subsequently owed their origin to the inspiration of Benedict. We can already trace the development of the two great principles of Monasticism ; obedience and labour, both manual and mental. The first kind (manual) was naturally assigned to those whose physical strength seemed to promise the greatest results, and St. Gregory tells us of a Goth, of herculean powers, to whom the saint appropriately appointed the grubbing of the soil, the clearing away of weeds, &c., as his humble but useful portion of the common labour.

Side by side with the Goths, in the new communities, were to be found the sons of Roman Senators, come to learn all that Benedict could teach them of the science both of this world and the next. For it is worthy of remark, as Mabillon observes. (1) that the Benedictine Monasteries, were, from the very beginning, the cradles of the arts and sciences ; or, as another historian of the order says, they were so many temples into which the Muses fled, in that disastrous age, and where they claimed and received the right of sanctuary. (2)

At first sight it would seem improbable that Rome, whose intellectual pre-eminence, at that period is attested by Muratori, (3) should have sent her sons to learn at the feet of a humble hermit. But the words of Gregory are precise and positive. It is said that many men of note visited Benedict. Of these history has preserved the names of two senators, Equitius and Tertullus, who confided to the saint's care their sons, named respectively, Maurus and Placidus.

Of Maurus we shall hear again. Of Placidus, suffice it to say that he afterwards became the Apostle of Sicily, where

(1) *Pref. ad. Sœc. tertium Bened.*

(2) *Scolæ in quas musæ, illo œvo, transfugæ, tanquam in asylum quoddam tutissimum, secesserunt : ibique deinceps nidum sibi parârunt.* Ziegelbauer, *Hist. Rei. Lit. Ord. S. Bened.* t. i.

(3) *V. Sup.* p. 13.

he received the crown of martyrdom at the hands of the pagans of that island. (1)

Benedict now seemed to have entered the haven of calm, after being tossed on a "sea of troubles;" he saw his work prosper and he was apparently resigning himself to pass the remainder of his days in the solitudes of Subiaco. Vain project! If the clouds that so lately lowered o'er his head seemed buried in the ocean's deep bosom, fresh clouds arose which threatened still more serious disturbances. Hitherto we have seen the saint's body endangered, now we shall see both body and soul attacked together, and that from a quarter whence such malice could be little expected.

Thus it is that Providence, for its own wise purposes, uses the mighty lever of persecution, in order to raise great men to the level of their missions.

Near the saint's retreat lived a person named Florentius. The mind of this man, who, in an evil hour, had been invested with the sacred character of the priesthood, was poisoned by the influence of what our great poet has styled the "green-eyed monster." He was jealous of Benedict's fame and success, and therefore resolves, by means the simplest and most direct, to rid himself of both together.

Plutarch tells us that the thought of the victories of Miltiades completely banished sleep from the eyes of Themistocles. (2) In the same manner, the peaceful, but not less glorious, victories of Benedict exercised a disturbing influence on the slumbers of Florentius. There is no peace for this envious Levite, so long as the presence of the holy hermit continues, as it were, a standing reproach before his eyes.

(1) *Acta S. S. Ord. S. Bened.* t. 1. p. 61. See (*loc. cit.*) an interesting account of the arrival in Sicily of Placidus, and of his recognition by Messalinus, a man of note and an old friend of his father's. "*Videns autem Messalinus beatum Placidum juxta maris littorâ stantem formamque ejus vultui Tertulli, patris ipsius assimilantem . . . diutius complectens & in pectus suum adstringens, &c.*"

(2) *Plut. in Vit. Themist.*

A poisoned loaf is presented to Benedict, by Florentius. The saint warned, from on high, of his danger, simply bids a raven to fly away with the fatal food. (1) Florentius baffled, but not disconcerted returns to the charge.

Having failed in his attack on the saint's body, he attempts to imperil his soul and those of his brethren.

For this purpose he sends, among the young monks, seven naked girls, who by the wantonness of their gestures, and the license of their language, endeavoured to provoke the youthful cenobites to a certain fall.

This was too much for the patience even of Benedict who therefore resolves to seek safety in flight.

Accompanied by a few chosen friends, he bids farewell to Subiaco and sets forth, with full faith in Providence, to find a new home. Scarcely has he looked his last of his late abode, when Maurus comes rushing to announce to him with joy, that Florentius, overtaken by a sudden calamity, has miserably perished. The holy man reproves this unseemly joy over the death of an enemy, whom he has forgiven in imitation of his Divine Master. The little band of pilgrims then continue their route. After wandering, for some time, on the banks of the Aniello, and treading all its détours, as it winds through a long and narrow gorge, they arrive at a little village situated on the brow of a lofty mountain. This was the celebrated Monte Cassino, on the borders of the modern Abruzzi and Terra di Lavoro. Here in this "land of labour," on the spot hallowed, so to speak, by the virtues and the genius of Varro, that monk of paganism, Benedict resolved to halt.

But we must not forget to mention that his journey hither, like that of Moses through the wilderness was marked by

(1) The raven (as we shall presently see) was the favourite bird of Benedict; it was to him what the owl was to Minerva, or the eagle to St. John.

many miracles. Two angels watched over his safety, and *two ravens* followed his footsteps. "We need not be astonished" says St. Peter Damian, "if the angelic spirits, who watch so tenderly over the good, point out the holy man's path, "since even the animals themselves follow him, to keep him "company." (1)

It is said that, to this day, two or three ravens come regularly, once a year, to build their nests in the forest of Monte Cassino, and while so engaged fly daily to the gates of the monastery, waking with their cries, the echoes of the venerable pile, as they ask for their accustomed supply of food, which they seem to claim by virtue of an old prescriptive right. (2)

St. Benedict is supposed to have arrived at Monte Cassino about the year 529. He was then in the 49th year of his age. Justinian then occupied the imperial throne; Felix IV. sat in the chair of Peter: and Athalaric, king of the Ostrogoths, ruled at Rome. The date is important because it is associated with the memory of three events of the greatest interest in the records of Christian archæology. These are the destruction of paganism, the foundation of the famous Abbey of Monte Cassino, and the preservation of the treasures of ancient learning and civilization.

We can easily understand with what pain the saint must have beheld the worship of the pagan deities still celebrated on the summit of this "heaven-kissing hill."

For here, notwithstanding the scepticism of philosophers and the contempt into which the pagan priesthood had fallen, there still flourished a temple of Apollo, fully two centuries after the conversion of Constantine, and nearly a century and a-half after the famous Edict of Theodosius. (3) Baronius

(1) S. Pet. Dam. Sermo. in Vig. S. Bened.

(2) The visitor to Monte Cassino may still see the marble figure of a raven, beside the great statue of the saint, in the courtyard of the monastery.

(3) The conversion of Constantine took place in 313; the Edict of Theo-

severely censures the negligence of the bishops, who could tolerate so deplorable a state of things. (1) The fact, however, is that paganism, though vanquished, still survived not only here, but in various parts of the old Roman world. A religion which had struck root so deeply in human nature was not to be extirpated by a single blow. As a general rule, it may be said that throughout the fifth and a considerable portion of the sixth century, the towns were Christian, the country pagan. (2) Pope Gregory in his life of the saint clearly implies this. (3) Indeed the fact admits of but little doubt. "The century which saw the fall "of so many altars, beheld that of the Muses still surrounded "by an adoring multitude . . . . In the midst of the "fifth century the sacred fowls of the Capitol were still fed, "and the Consuls, on entering office, demanded their auspices. "The calendar noted the pagan festivals, side by side with "the feasts of the Church. Within the city and beyond, "throughout Italy and the Gallic provinces, and even the entire "Western Empire, the sacred groves were still untouched "by the axe, idols were adored, altars were standing and the "pagan populace, believing alike in the eternity of their

dosius was published in 390. "The ruin of paganism," says Gibbon, "in the age of Theodosius, is perhaps the only example of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition." Decline and Fall. Ch. 28.

There can now be no doubt whatever that Gibbon has expressed himself much too strongly here.

(1) *Nescio enim quâ incuriâ dormitantium episcoporum, quæ longe lateque, in orbe Christiano, extincta erat idolatria, in monte illo, altioribus fixa radicibus adhuc vigeat.* Annal. ad an 529.

(2) St. Maximus of Turin, who lived in the 5th century, says: "Si ad agrum processeris, cernis aras ligneas et simulacra lapidea." Serm. 101.

See also Salvian, De Guber, Dei, and Beugnot, "Description du paganisme en Occident."

M. Beugnot, who has thrown a flood of light on this subject, furnishes us with some curious details as to the relations of Constantine with the paganism of the West. It would appear that the first Christian Emperor while in the East, he was surrounding himself with the bishops of the universal church and taking part in their deliberations (so far as haranguing them, assisting at their proceedings, &c.) in the West, allowed himself to be addressed as the Pontifex Maximus of paganism, allowed medals to be struck in his honour, bearing the strange title of "Divus" engraved on them, &c.

(3) *Vetustissimum fanum . . . . in quo, antiquorum more gentiliū, vltio rusticorum populo, Apollo colebatur.* Dial. L. ii. C. 8.

"worship and of the Empire, were waiting in scornful patience, till mankind grew weary of the folly of the cross." (1)

Such were the difficulties with which Benedict had to contend, on arriving at Monte Cassino. But Benedict was not the man to bend before difficulties. Not only does he level the temple to the dust, but he converts the pagan worshippers to Christianity.

This he shall relate himself to us, in the immortal words which the genius of Dante has placed in his mouth :

That mountain on whose slope Cassino stands,  
Was frequented, of old, upon its summit,  
By a deluded folk, and ill-disposed ;  
And I am he who first up thither bore  
The name of Him who brought upon the earth  
The Truth, that so much sublimateth us,  
And such abundant grace upon me shone  
That all the neighbouring towns I drew away,  
From the impious worship that seduced the world (2)

The sun of paganism having thus set to rise no more, the Sun of Christianity, which "enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world" rose, never more to set.

On the ruins of Apollo's temple, Benedict erects two chapels, one to John the Baptist, the other to St. Martin.

(1) Ozanam, *Civilisation au Vme. Siècle*.

(2) *Paradiso*, Canto. Longfellow's translation.

Milman (*Latin Christianity*) well observes: "If we might imagine the pagan deity to have any real and conscious being, and to represent the sun, he might behold the monastic form of Christianity, which rose on the ruins of his ancient worship, almost as universally spread throughout the world as, of old, the adoration of his visible majesty."

The monks were the instruments generally employed in the destruction of the pagan temples, and I fear it must be said that they accomplished their work not wisely but too well. No doubt their motives were honorable, but, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever!" and had their zeal been tempered with a little more discretion, we should not to-day have to lament over the loss of so many splendid monuments of ancient civilization. Throughout the whole of Western Europe only one great temple escaped the fury of these holy levellers, and that (the Pantheon) owed its preservation to the timely intervention of a Roman Pontiff.

Gibbon (*Decline and Fall*, c. 28) is eloquent in deploring this wholesale destruction, but not more so than Chateaubriand: "De toutes parts, on démolit les temples; *"perte a jamais déplorable pour les arts."* *Etudes Historiques*, t. iii. A French bishop was one of the most active in this crusade. This was St. Martin of Tours, who like St. Benedict, wherever he pulled down a pagan erected a Christian temple. "Ubi fana destruxerat, statim ibi aut ecclesias aut monasteria construebat." Sulp. Sev. in *Vit. Sancti Martin*, c. 10.

This was the origin of the famous monastery of Monte Cassino, a name for ever memorable both in the history of the Church and of literature.

Here it was that Benedict wrote his famous Rule, which both the councils and Fathers of the Church have vied with each other in extolling. To this I shall presently return. Here also he received a visit from Totila, the greatest of Theodoric's successors. The barbarian chieftain has heard of the saint's great reputation and wishes to see him. But first he employs a little stratagem, either from a wish to test the holy man's miraculous powers, or, (which is equally probable) from that love of *ruse*, common to children and barbarians. Riggo, his spatharidus, (sword bearer) is ordered to equip himself in the royal garments, and thus disguised to personate the king, before the saint.

Riggo obeys, but the penetrating glance of Benedict soon detects the trick. The jackdaw is discovered beneath the peacock's borrowed plumes. Riggo retires discomfited, and announces to his master that no disguise can deceive the glance of the saint. Then Totila himself goes forth to meet the saint, and, like Attila before Leo the Great, is seized with awe on beholding the holy man. Thrice the barbarous chieftain falls to the ground, and thrice is he raised by Benedict. At length the interview begins. "The two great elements of reviving society," says Montalembert, "the victorious barbarians and the invincible monks are face to face." Benedict addresses Totila in accents marked by that tone of holy freedom which kings, and particularly barbarous kings, so seldom hear. Totila though an Arian, (like all the barbarous tribes who had embraced Christianity) listens patiently. The saint predicts his conquest of Rome, his death at the expiration of nine years, and warns him, in view of the account he is to render before the Great Judge, to amend his

life and become more humane, &c. All these predictions were fully verified; and we learn, on excellent authority, that from that day a marked improvement took place in the manners of the barbarian chieftain. (1)

The last days of the saint were troubled by the shadows which coming events cast before them. To his mind's eye the fierce Lombards, (those terrible barbarians who, as St. Gregory tells us, for seven and twenty years, were the plague and terror of Rome) are already profaning the sanctity of his retreat at Monte Cassino. But he is consoled by the prospect of the future glories of his order. (2)

Rising, one morning, before his brethren, the saint, while gazing from the window of his cell, was suddenly dazzled by a ray of light, so intense that the whole world seemed as it were illuminated. (3) The general tradition is that in this

(1) "Ex illo jam tempore," says Pope Gregory, "minus crudelis fuit." Dial LII. c. 14. This statement is confirmed by Procopius: "Benignitas quæ illique nec barbaro, nec hosti satis convenit. Unde factum est ut nomen ejus, ut sapientia, ita et benignitas ne celebre apud Romanos jam esset." De Bello Goth, c. 3. See also Muratori, Annal. Ital. ad an 536 and 543. The Goths were converted to Christianity by Ulphilas, A.D. 360. Unfortunately it so happened that Ulphilas was an Arian and thus as Gibbon remarks, "a deadly poison was infused into the cup of salvation." Decline and Fall, ch. 37. The same writer observes, "The progress of Christianity has been marked by two glorious and decisive victories; over the learned and luxurious citizens of the Roman Empire, and over the warlike barbarians of Scythia and Germany, who subverted the empire and embraced the religion of the Romans." This was the converse of the statement of Horace:

"Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes,  
Intulit agresti latine."

(2) The abbey was pillaged and destroyed by the Lombards in 580. It was rebuilt in 720; was again ruined by the Saracens in 884; by the Normans in 1046; and by the Emperor Frederick in 1239. But it seemed to possess a wondrous vitality, rising, each time, like the phoenix from its ashes. Threatened, in our own day, by the Goths of Piedmont, this venerable pile equally dear to Religion and the Muses, has been saved from profanation, by the voice of indignant Europe.

"A thralldom studious to expel,  
Old laws, and ancient customs to derange,  
To Creed or Ritual brings no fatal change." (Wordsworth)

(3) St. Gregory, Dial II. c. 34. St. Bonaventure explains the vision by saying that Benedict's mind, under the influence of the Divine presence, had "grown colossal," and that he thus, with one luminous glance, surveyed the globe, from pole to pole.



glance, Benedict saw "not an age, but all time," and that looking into the womb of time, his eye was gladdened to behold the triumph of his own handiwork.

Benedict may now sing his "Nunc dimittis." His race was run, his battles ended, and like the Apostle, it only remained for him to receive the crown which had been assigned him. His last act was characteristic of his firm and vigorous mind.

When his hour was come, he requested to be supported by his brethren, and thus, like a true soldier of the Church, with head erect and arms extended, he passed calmly to his reward.

The date of the saint's birth, as we have already seen, is doubtful; that of his death is equally so. Various dates have been assigned, but Mabillon is of opinion that it could not have occurred *before* the year 543.

The body of the saint was tenderly laid in the same grave which held the remains of his sister, St. Scolastica, so that, as St. Gregory observes, those who in life, were one in devotion to God, were, after death, united even in one tomb. (1.)

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### THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT.

THE famous Rule of St. Benedict exhibits all the excellent qualities, without any of the extravagances of the East. St. Gregory has admirably described it in a few striking

(1) *Quo facto contigit, ut quorum mens una semper in Deo fuerat, eorum quoque corpora nec sepultura separaret.* Dial. II. 33.

words, when he says it was equally remarkable both as regards manner and matter; the one for its clearness, the other for its discretion. (1.)

What St. Pachomius had been for Egypt, St. Basil for Asia Minor, Cassian and Columbanus, for Gaul and the North, that, in a more eminent degree, was St. Benedict for Italy, and ultimately for the whole West. His Rule was, as Montalembert remarks, the first that had been written in and for the West, and was intended to give monasticism its final and universal form. In accomplishing this, Benedict had no desire to subvert what his predecessors had founded. His object was to complete, not to destroy; and he approached his work armed with all the wisdom which history and personal experience could supply. "Hear, oh, my son," he says, in the Introduction to the Rule, "the precepts of the Master, and lend him willingly the ear of your heart. Fear not to accept the advice of a good father. Let it sink into your memory and fructify in your life, in order that you may recover, *by labour and obedience*, the place which you have lost by sloth and rebellion. To you then do I now address myself, whoever you be, who renouncing your own will, *in order to serve under the true King, our Lord Jesus Christ*, take up the invincible and glorious arms of obedience." Here we find clearly stated, both the object to be attained and the means of attaining it. The object is the service of the Lord, the means are labour and obedience. Benedict requires no impossible virtues. His words are addressed to *all*, "*whoever you be*;" and his intention

(1) Discretione præcipua, sermone luculenta.

Proofs of Benedict's discretion are afforded at every stage of his career. A striking instance of this was exhibited on the occasion of his arrival at Monte Cassino, where he finds a *chained hermit*. Benedict, whose good sense is offended by so singular a spectacle, remonstrates with the hermit, and tells him that the love of Christ is the only bond that a Christian should bear. The hermit obeys. Mabillon says that the chain was preserved, for many ages, in a neighbouring church. Præf. ad Acta. S. S. Ord. S. Bened. t. 1.

evidently was to frame a rule of life which *all* might adopt. Labour and obedience. Mark well these words, for they represent the pivot round which not only monasticism, but the whole duty of man revolves. It is often supposed that labour began only *after* the fall, of which it was the punishment. This is a mistake. Labour began in Paradise, and is associated with the golden age of humanity. (1.) Under the Old Law the greatest saints laboured, while under the New Christ himself, the great model of all Christians, deigned to enhance the dignity and to illustrate the necessity of labour by toiling at a carpenter's trade. (2.) But if the value of labour be great, that of obedience is immeasurably greater. This is a simple truth, which lies (if it be not a solecism to say that *truth can lie*) on the very surface of things as they are recorded in the pages of Holy Writ. Does anyone doubt it? Let him explain consistently with his doubt, the history of the Fall, and of the Atonement. (3.)

Obedience is the weapon with which the Christian Soldier (*Miles Christi*; Bolland, t. ii. June 1st,) is to win his greatest victory, the conquest of self. It is the price to be paid by the soul for the privilege of raising herself above the empire of the passions, in order, as Bossuet says, "to fix herself completely in God."

(1) See Gen. ii. 15, and iii. 19.

(2) Mark, vi. 3.

(3) To quote passages from Scripture on this subject, would be to quote the whole Bible; for what in reality is the Bible but the history of the evils of disobedience on the one hand, and of the merits of obedience on the other? Nevertheless, see the following passages: Deut. xvii. 8, 9; I Kings, xv. 22; Eccli. iv. 17; Osee, vi. 6; Prov. xv. 28; Mat. ix. 13, xviii. 3; Rom. v. 19; Heb. ii. 9; Phil. ii. 8; Ephes. vi. 5; Coloss. iii. 1, 2, 3; Acts, ix. 7, 8, &c., &c.

The Fathers seem to out-do themselves in their praise of obedience, which they seem to regard, not so much as a single virtue, as the source and parent of all others. Compare the following, which might be easily multiplied to any extent. St. Augustine says: "Quid enim Dominus querit a te, nisi te?"

"Fortasse non est laboriosum relinquere sua; sed valde laboriosum relinquere semetipsum." S. Greg. Mag. Hom. 32.

"Hoc est virtus quæ animam perfectæ Deo subditam, sub umbrâ alarum suis securé facit vivere." S. Ber. Serm. 64, &c., &c.

The Greek Fathers are equally eloquent in praise of obedience. See the *seniorum*, in Vit. Patrum, ap Rosweyde.

This virtue, besides, acquires a further importance from the fact that it was the result of the voluntary act of a free agent. No superior force compelled the monk to accept the law of obedience. By an act of the will, he renounced the will, as the surest means of finding freedom and tranquillity. (1)

It is therefore with some surprise that we find an eminent writer of the present day, whose views are generally marked by the highest spirit of impartiality, declaim against the virtue of obedience, in no measured terms. In this principle, M. Guizot (2) can only see a fatal gift offered to Europe, by the monks. It was derived neither from ancient Greece nor Rome, nor from the Germanic tribes, nor even from the *spirit of Christianity itself, properly understood*. It is a relic of the dying despotism of the Empire, &c., &c.

Whether, after what has been already said on this subject, the spirit of Christianity has been *properly understood* by M. Guizot, is probably a matter which admits of doubt. What is certain is that, in another portion of the same work the distinguished writer admits that this bold, not to say extreme, spirit of self-assertion which he so much admires is a relic of pure paganism. "A fact of supreme importance, and which to my mind has never attracted sufficient attention, strikes me at first. It is that the principle of free thought, the principle of all philosophy, reason asserting itself as the point de départ and guide, is essentially an *offspring of antiquity*; an idea which modern society derives from Greece and Rome. Clearly we have received it neither from Christianity nor from Germany, for in neither of these

(1) This idea is well expressed by Boileau :  
" Pour le rendre libre, il le faut enchaîner."

(2) Hist. de la Civilisation en France : Leçon xiv.

No one at the same time more fully appreciates, nor more readily acknowledges the immense services rendered to modern civilization, by the monks, than M. Guizot, loc. cit.

"elements of our civilization was it contained. In the Greco-Roman civilization, on the other hand, it was powerful, dominant. That is the true origin of the most precious inheritance which antiquity has bequeathed to the modern world," &c. (1)

I have thought it right to examine this objection at some length, both on account of the importance of the subject and the eminence of the objector. But while admitting the large place which obedience occupies in the Christian Code, let us also frankly recognize the fact that the spirit of the Christian religion has been eminently favourable to Freedom. The greatest political philosopher of modern times has clearly proved this, (2) even if it were not attested by the verdict of history. We shall see many proofs of it as we advance.

To return to St. Benedict's rule. In it, everything, down to the minutest details of life, is settled : sleep, food, exercise, conversation, prayer, all are clearly prescribed.

In the division of labour, each person has assigned to him that for which he is best adapted. "To the weak, was given work of a gentler kind ; to the strong, of another kind. In a word, the greater part of this religious legislation displays a vast acquaintance with the art of governing men. Plato's Republic is only a splendid phantom. Saints Augustin, Basil, and Benedict have been real lawgivers and the patriarchs of many great peoples." (3) In St. Benedict's Rule, we notice one great innovation, the vow of "Stability," by which the candidate for admission bound himself never to look back, after having once put his hand to the plough. Neither in the East, nor in the West, do we find any trace of this principle before St. Benedict's time.

(1) *Civilisation en France*, Leçon 30.

(2) Montesquieu, *Esprit des Loix* : See book 24th, ch. 6th. where he refutes a paradox of Bayle's, afterwards re-asserted by Voltaire. See also M. Villemain's *Éloge de Montesquieu*.

(3) *Génie du Christianisme*.

The consequences of this state of things were at times highly scandalous, and St. Benedict tells us that numbers of so-called religious roamed through the country owning no superior, bound by no law, but living as they liked and doing what they pleased. (1)

By the vow of stability, this evil was completely eradicated. Many violent invectives have been launched in modern times, against this principle ; but the experience of many centuries has fully attested the wisdom of Benedict. (2)

Another feature of his Rule (though not peculiar to it) was the principle of self-reliance. The various handicrafts, necessary to the existence of the little community, were practised within the walls of the monastery. In a word, the monks were self-supporting. But while they provided for their own simple wants, they forgot not those of others. Hospitality of the most generous kind, that glorious tradition of monastic life, was enjoined, as a sacred duty. The study of Scripture, and the cultivation of the intellect, occupied also a prominent place in the round of daily labours.

The possession of private property was strictly forbidden ; but no allusion is made to the monastic vows of poverty and chastity. This omission is explained by the fact that these vows were implied, from the earliest ages, in the very idea of the monastic state. Bingham (3) labours hard to shew

(1) St. Benedict enumerates four classes of monks, viz. hermits, cœnobites, *sarabaites*, and *gyrovagi*. The latter two were a kind of monastic Bashi-Bazouks and are severely handled by the saint. See also S. Jerome, Ep. 95, ad Rusticum : Ep. 18, ad Eustoch ; St. Augustine, De Op. Monach. C. xxviii. &c., &c.

(2) For a splendid defence of the vow of Stability, see Génie du Christianisme, L. iii, c. 4.

(3) Christian Antiquities, Book vii. Bingham relies chiefly on a passage in St. Augustin's works (De Bon. Vid. c. ix and x.) where the Saint says that the marriage of nuns, after their profession, though sinful was not void : *Nubere post continentiae votum damnabile est non tamen damnandæ tales nuptiæ*. From this Bingham infers that if a professed *monk* might contract a valid marriage ; a fortiori a married man might become a monk without renouncing his character of a husband. I don't think such logic calls for a serious refutation. I observe, however, 1st that the word *nubere* shews the saint to have spoken of women, not men ; 2ndly that the term *votum* clearly proves

that monks might marry, in the primitive times: but his authorities do not warrant this assertion. On the contrary, the early ecclesiastical historians, Eusebius, Sozomen, Socrates, &c., clearly prove that celibacy was a law of the monastic profession.

As regards the government of the monastery, the chief authority was vested in the Abbot, whose power, on almost all points, was absolute. The office was elective, and here M. Guizot seems to find a counterpoise to the principle of passive obedience, so strongly inculcated. For if the monks were bound to obey the Abbot, the latter, elected by the free voice of the community, was in turn most solemnly bound to obey the Rule. Hence, says the distinguished writer just quoted, a singular *mélange* of despotism and liberty: on the one hand, passive obedience; on the other, a limited and elective monarchy.

Looking at the Rule, as a whole, we find it to consist of 73 Chapters, which may be thus classified, viz.:—

9 On general morals.

13 On the religious offices of the community.

29 On discipline, punishments, &c., forming what may be called the criminal code.

10 Forming the political code; government of the monastery, &c,

12 On miscellaneous subjects.

While adopting the principal features of Eastern Monasticism, as described at length in the Institutes of Cassian, St. Benedict avoids that extreme tendency to isolation and contemplation which marked the monks of Syria and the Thebaid. With singular propriety he founds his great Monastery of Monte Cassino, in the midst of the Terra di Lavoro, (land

that such vows were made. All that can be inferred from St. Augustin's testimony is that in the African Church of the 4th century, the marriage of professed nuns was not void. According to the present law of the church, as declared by the Council of Trent, all such marriages are null and void.

of labour) the name of which, as Montfalembert remarks, "seems naturally suited to a soil destined to be the cradle of "the most laborious men that the world has ever known." While he recognizes the necessity of chastising the body and reducing the flesh to a proper state of subjection to the spirit, he nevertheless avoids all those extreme practices, those terrible macerations, which suited the sombre genius of the East, but which the characteristic good sense of the West condemned. (1)

Add to these points of difference, the immense intellectual activity of Western Monasticism, and we shall be able to appreciate the value of the reform (for such it was) introduced by St. Benedict.

I do not, however, mean to convey that the Eastern monks led a purely contemplative life. Among them labour had its appointed place, its importance being admitted by St. Basil, whose rule was and is the guide of monastic life in the East. But their labour was less continuous and less productive than that of the Western monks. (2)

(1) See on this subject (besides the Rule of St. Benedict) Cassian, *De Instit. Cœnob.* I. ii ; Sulpic Sever *Dial.* I. 8. The Rule of Columbanus was the most strict of any in the West, which Gibbon endeavours to explain by saying that Columbanus acquired his ideas of austerity amid the poverty of Ireland! This does not agree with what Bede tells us of the hospitality and literary glories of ancient Ireland, *Eccles. Hist.* III. 27. Dean Milman's assertion (*Latin Christianity*) that St. Benedict made all monastic perfection consist in a mere mechanical observance of rule is so utterly opposed to the fact, that I am disposed, in charity, to believe that the learned Dean never read the Rule which he so boldly criticises. It reminds one of the famous mare's nest which the "learned" Mosheim, having put his spectacles on the wrong way, discovered in the works of St. Elijah.

(2) The history of the Messalian heretics, who despised manual labour, is instructive on this point, as showing the sentiments of the Eastern Church on the subject. St. Epiphanius, distinguishes two classes who bore this name, one pagan, the other Christian. The history of the latter may be summed up in three words ; mysticism, laziness, and crime. They were condemned by several national councils, and by the Œcumenical Council of Ephesus, in 431. St. Augustin wrote against them his treatise, *De Opere Monachorum*, in which he insists on the necessity of labour. They disappear from view, but again crop out in the 10th and 12th centuries, embellishing their original creed with some varieties borrowed from the Manicheans. The fact of their condemnation enlists all Mosheim's sympathies on their side. See Tillemont, t. viii., Fleury, *Hist. Eccles. L. xix. c. 25.* Le Clere, *Biblioth. Univ.* t. xv.



Neither in the department of physical, nor in that of mental labour, have the Eastern monks produced anything that entitles them to rank as benefactors of mankind. St. Anthony, the celebrated father of the Eastern cœnobites, was so ignorant, according to St. Athanasius, that he could neither read nor write. (1)

“As the empire of the world had passed from the Asiatics to the Greeks, and from the Greeks to the Romans, thus truth passes from Jerusalem to Rome. The monastic life, like the Church, is founded in the East; but, also like the Church, it only acquires its full development in the West.” (2)

The triumphs of Western monasticism, its vast and almost incalculable services to literature, to civilization and religion, shall form the subject of the following pages.

Meantime let us hear the “Last of the Fathers” describe the excellence of the Benedictine Rule.

“This Rule,” says Bossuet, (3) “is an epitome of Christianity. A learned and mysterious abridgment of the whole doctrine of the Gospel; of all the institutes of the

(1) St. Athan. in vit. S. Anton. Tillemont, however, conjectures with much probability, that the saint was acquainted with the Coptic literature (that of his vernacular) and was ignorant only of Greek. (Mem. Eccles. t. vii.) The philosopher, Synesius, says of him (almost in the language applied by Ben Jonson to Shakspeare) that “he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature through.” His fame had reached the Emperor Constantine, who even addressed him a letter of invitation, which Anthony did not think proper to accept. “The Egyptian peasant,” says Gibbon, “respectfully declined a respectful invitation from the Emperor Constantine.” His brethren were equally surprised at the condescension of the Emperor and the firmness of the saint. “Do not,” exclaims Anthony “be surprised that an Emperor has written to us. He is only a man, like ourselves. Rather be surprised to think that the King of Heaven has deigned to write His law for man.” S. Athan. loc. cit. Not only does he decline the Emperor’s invitation, but he does not at first, think it necessary even to reply to the imperial letter. His brethren remonstrate: the saint yields, and thus addresses the ruler of the Roman world, “Despise the world, think of the last judgment, recollect that Jesus Christ is the only true and eternal king. Practise humanity and justice, &c.” Ib. How different and yet not wholly unlike, the Saint and the Cynic: Anthony and Diogenes.

(2) Montalembert, Moines d’Occident, vol. I.

(3) Panegyrique de St. Benoît.

“Holy Fathers, of all counsels of perfection. In it may be  
 “seen, in an eminent degree, prudence and simplicity, hu-  
 “mility and courage, severity and gentleness, *liberty and*  
 “*authority*. There correction has all its firmness, conde-  
 “scension, all its attractiveness, command, all its force and  
 “subjection, all its quiet. Silence has its gravity, and  
 “speaking its grace, strength its exercise, and weakness its  
 “support. And yet, my Fathers, he calls it a commence-  
 “ment,(1) in order to keep you always in a state of holy  
 “fear.”

I shall not attempt, by a single remark, to weaken the effect of these beautiful and eloquent words.

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## THE BENEDICTINE ORDER.

If it be a great thing even to fail in great things (as Longinus tells us), what estimate shall we form of those who have ever succeeded in the greatest of all things? What shall we say of an order renowned beyond all others in history; an order which has given to the Church some of her most illustrious bishops, pontiffs, and saints, and which has been the missionary, the colonizer, the teacher, the artist of Europe? Evidently (as already observed) a complete history of such an order would be a history of Christian civilization itself. But if we are appalled by the magnitude of such a task, we may at least, be permitted to take a rapid view of the chief events in these glorious annals. (2.) St. Benedict

(1) *Initium Conversationis*, Reg. c. 73.

(2) Pope John XXII. (elected 1316, died 1334), caused a return to be made of the number of eminent men that the Order of St. Benedict had then produced.

had the satisfaction of seeing his Rule carried both to Sicily and France during his own lifetime.

St. Placidus starts for Sicily, in 536, where he lays the foundation of a monastery, and where he soon received the crown of martyrdom at the hands of the barbarians. (1.)

The Benedictine Rule is borne to Gaul by St. Maurus, who proceeds thither on the invitation of Innocent, Bishop of Mans. Gaul, which, under the name of France, was afterwards destined to become the "eldest daughter of the Church," had long been distinguished for her zeal in the cause of monasticism. In 360, St. Martin, monk and bishop, founded a monastery at Ligugè, near Poitiers; and later still another on a grander scale, at Marmoutiers (*Majus Monasterium*), near Tours. In 410, is founded the celebrated Abbey of Lerins, the school in which so many illustrious men were formed; and about the same time, St. Victor founds a monastery at Marseilles, on the site once occupied by Cassian and his monks.

France, ever in the van of Christian civilization, thus led the way in this new path of moral and intellectual progress, and the middle of the fifth century, saw the chief monasteries of Europe erected on her soil. To these, Maurus now adds the Abbey of Glanfeuil, afterwards known as that of St. Benedict, on the Loire.

But we must not forget the parent establishment of Monte Cassino, which fills so important a place in the Benedictine Annals.

Providence has been pleased to crown this mountain with a three-fold auréole. Here (as already remarked) the paganism of Southern Italy received its death blow from the

This shows twenty-four Popes, besides a vast number of Bishops, Saints, &c. See Helyot, *Hist. des Ordres Monastiques*. Moreri seems to think, however, that the Benedictines sometimes claim more than their due, and this is also the opinion of Baronius.

(1.) Act. S. S. Ord. Si. Ben. t. 1.

hands of St. Benedict, here was founded the great institution which was destined to become the mother and mistress of all monasteries of the West ; here also the genius of antiquity, the Muses and Graces, flying from the rage of the Goths and Vandals, found a secure retreat. How many generations of pilgrims have since ascended these venerable slopes ? Before how many illustrious visitors have not the hospitable gates of this Abbey been flung open ? To name them, would be to fill a list as long as the catalogue of the ships in Homer. Popes, kings and emperors, from Gregory the Great to Charlemagne, have been welcomed within these walls ; so have artists, writers and Saints. For nowhere is true worth more fully appreciated than within the precincts of the Benedictine Monasteries. The name of Monte Cassino shall occur more than once again in these pages. In England, the order appears towards the close of the sixth century, of which more hereafter.

In Spain, the Rule of St. Benedict appears about the year 633 ; (1) in Germany, under the auspices of its great Apostle, St. Boniface, about a century later. The names of the Abbeys of Prum, Lorsch, Ratisbonne, Fulde, Ellwang and Salzbourn now successively present themselves. We thus see the Benedictine Rule accepted in turn by Italy, Gaul, England, Spain and Germany. But it was only in the eighth century, that its triumph was definitively assured.

In its earlier stages, the Rule had to contend with others brought from the East, and one of the advantages conferred by the Benedictine Code, was that it substituted for these various systems, one uniform constitution. (2)

(1) This is the date given by Mabillon, who, however, admits that it is only a conjecture. *Annal. Ord. S. Bened.*

(2) In some monasteries, several different rules were observed by members of the same community. Thus Gregory of Tours, (*Hist. Fran. L. 10.*) speaks of St. Basil's, of Cassian's Rule, and of others, as existing at the same time in the same place. See also Mabillon, *Annal. Ord. S. Ben.* The Rule of

From the sixth to the ninth century, we seem to behold the golden age of the Benedictine Rule. After that, the seeds of decay begin to display themselves, for monks are still men, and men are weak.(1) Discipline now perishes, and disorders of all kinds appear. Various provincial councils, those of Châlons, Soissons, Tours, Mayence, &c. recognize and try to grapple with the evil. Even the temporal power intervenes, and Charlemagne makes it the subject of positive enactments, in his capitularies.(2) A clear head, a firm hand, and an ardent zeal are required for the work of reform, and all these are in good time, found in the person of Benedict of Aniane. The fame of this holy man soon attracted the attention of Charlemagne and of his contemporaries generally. In 794, we find him taking a prominent part in the Council of Frankfort, at which Felix, Bishop of Urgel, and head of the "Adoptians," is condemned.(3) Later still, in 817, St. Benedict presides at an assembly held at Aix-le-Chapelle, (the Capital of the Carolingian Empire,) a purely Monastic Synod. The object of this meeting, was to sanction finally and officially, the reform of the monasteries, for which the Saint had so long laboured. His efforts are crowned with success. A Decree or Capitulary is published, containing eighty articles which form at once the complement and commentary of the Rule

Columbanus lingered long in parts of Gaul, Scotland and Ireland. "*Nullus tamen infitias ibit quod, ineunte seculo octavo, ubique Sanctus ordo Benedictinus floruerit, nullusque alius ordo Monasticus, in Ecclesia occidentale, per aliquot secula notus fuerit.*" Holstenius, *Præf. ad Cod. Reg.*

(1) This period of 300 years marks a kind of fatal cycle in ecclesiastical events.

(2) *Capitul. Car. Mag.*, t. 1., Ed. de Baluze.

(3) The "Adoptians," were so styled from their holding our Lord to be, as regards His humanity, the "Adopted" Son of God. It was, therefore, the old heresy of Nestorius with a new name. Alcuin, representing the genius and practical good sense of the West, wrote vigorously against this theological hair-splitting which, ever since the days of Arius had, desolated the East. Two legates of the Pope assisted at this Council, in which the episcopate of Gaul, Germany and Italy was represented.

of St. Benedict. "The commentary," says Guizot, "differs widely from the text." (1) Be this as it may, certain it is that Benedict of Aniane, who was ably sustained by the civil power, succeeded in effecting a most important reform of the monastic orders.

The next great name which meets us in the Benedictine Annals, is that of Cluny, whose famous Abbey was destined to repair the ravages inflicted on the order by the successive invasions of the Saracens and Normans. Cluny, founded in 910, by William, Duke of Aquitaine, reckons as its first Abbot, the holy Bernon, who there restores the Rule of St. Benedict.

Bernon is succeeded by St. Odo, the first musician, and first classical scholar of the age. After Odo, come Aymard, Maieul, Odilon, as learned as he was holy, and Hugh, the friend of Gregory VII., and one whose voice was heard with respect by kings, councils and popes. Hugh was also an architect of eminent ability, which is still attested by the remains of Cluny's noble basilica, over whose ruin even Napoleon was heard to sigh. The glories of Cluny are worthily closed (after a splendid existence of 290 years) by the name of Peter the Venerable.

Peter, the friend and correspondent of St. Bernard, and of Suger, the indefatigable preacher of the second crusade, the propagator in Asia of the Benedictine Rule, the fearless champion of the faith, stands forward as one of the most illustrious men of the age.

Nor should we forget the generous welcome which he gave to the unfortunate Abelard, when the great disputant broken down by age and suffering, sought a refuge within the hospitable walls of Cluny.

(1) *Civilisation en France*, Leçon XIV. M. Guizot draws a very striking contrast between the two Benedicts. The first of the name, he says, "appealed to all that was great and vigorous in human nature;" not so the second, who pays too much attention to unimportant details, &c.

The letter, which, afterwards on the death of his guest, Peter wrote to Heloise, announcing the event, clearly shews that these brave old monks bore, beneath their sackcloth and ashes, hearts whose cords vibrated to the "still, sad "music of humanity." (1)

As Cluny pales its ineffectual fires, the sun of Citeaux mounts to the meridian. Who has not heard of St. Bernard, of his zeal, his eloquence, his austerity, his sanctity, and his boundless influence, which enabled him, from the quiet of his cell, to lay down the law to Europe? Sprung from an illustrious family, possessing a handsome exterior, a vigorous and cultivated mind, a generous heart, lofty sentiments, a strong will, undaunted courage, matchless eloquence, in a word, all the choicest gifts that Fortune could bestow, St. Bernard renounces all, in order to devote himself to the austerities of the cloister.

It is with St. Bernard, as monk, that we are here concerned. He is said to have founded more than 100 monasteries himself, while his preaching, and still more his extraordinary sanctity, determined vast numbers to embrace the monastic profession.

Indeed so valuable were the services of the Cistercians generally that it was usually said that nothing great could be done in the Church without their co-operation. (2)

From the 9th to the 14th century the Benedictine monasteries were so many centres of intellectual activity. Not only did the monks preserve to us the literary treasures of Greece and Rome, not only did they save the Scriptures from destruction, but they have by innu-

(1) On the History of Cluny, see Lorain, "Essai Historique sur Cluny."

(2) Nil fere in Ecclesia nisi per Cistercienses exequitur. Annal. Cister. t. iv. Yet Fleury seems to think that St. Bernard, by recognizing the distinction between monks and lay brothers, committed a fatal mistake which proved the fruitful source of many dangers. See the 8th Discourse, prefixed to his Ecclesiastical History.

merable annals, chronicles, &c., handed down to us the materials of all our historical knowledge of the middle ages, which would otherwise have been completely lost. This intellectual labour, to which modern civilization is so immensely indebted, was enjoined as one of the most important duties of the religious life. St. Benedict himself recognizes it, later still Cassiodorus, after exchanging the court of Theodoric for the cloister of Vivarium, expresses himself more fully on the subject. (1) "Of all monastic labours," says he, "that of copying books is the one which pleases me the most. By it, the body is occupied, and the mind improved. It is preaching with the hand, speaking with the fingers, and fighting the devil with pens and ink." Nor did he confine himself exclusively to ecclesiastical subjects, on the contrary his catalogue embraces a large number of profane authors. (2)

Alcuin, another Benedictine monk and founder of the University of Paris, has left us a most interesting metrical catalogue of the library of the Cathedral of York, where the poets and philosophers of paganism figure, side by side, with the fathers of the Church. (3)

Equal zeal for literature is displayed by St. Bennett Biscop, founder of the Abbey of Wearmouth, and by Lupus, Abbot of Ferrières. (4)

(1) It has been questioned whether St. Benedict of whom Pope Gregory says that he was "blissfully ignorant," (*scienter indoctus*) really encouraged monastic studies. Ziegelbauer clearly proves that he did. See *Hist. Rei. Lit. Ord. S. Ben.* t. i. Baronius disputes the right of the Benedictines to claim Cassiodorus, as one of themselves, but it must be admitted that the balance of evidence is entirely in their favour. St. Pachomius, author of the oldest monastic rule, and St. Martin of Tours, also encouraged the literary labors of the monks, see Mabillon, *Etudes Monast.* Part. I. c. VI. and Sulp. Sev. in *vit. S. Martini*, c. vii.

(2) Cassiod. *Instit.* c. 39, Peter, the Venerable, expresses himself in the same sense, when writing to a monk of his day. *Ep. L. I.* 20.

(3) Alcuin, *De Pont. and Sanct. Ebor. Eccles.*

(4) Lingard, *Antiq. of the Anglo-Saxon Ch.* c. 10, Lupus Ferrar, *Ep.* 62, 14.



In general, it may be safely asserted that no sooner did a Benedictine ascend the episcopal throne of any see, than the foundation of some great school or college was laid. It was commonly said that a monastery without a library was like a camp without an armoury (1) and in periods of danger, which frequently occurred during the invasions of the Saracens and the Normans, the library was one of the first things which the monks endeavoured to save. Indeed it is only necessary to cast a glance at the long list of Benedictine libraries given by the great literary historian of the order, Ziegelbauer, in order to understand all that these illustrious monks have done for learning; even in the face of overwhelming dangers. (2)

Attached to each monastery was a transcribing room, styled, in mediæval Latin, a "Scriptorium." Here books were copied, and literary labour of all kinds performed. Great importance was attached to this department. The Scriptorium was inaugurated with great solemnity, the Abbot presided, and prayers were offered up in which God was besought to bestow his blessing on the work, and to grant that the good teaching of the books which would there be read might sink into the memories of the transcribers and fructify in their lives. (3)

In the selection of transcribers, the greatest care was

(1) *Clastrum sine armario, quasi castrum sine armentario.* Martene *Thesaur. anecdot.* t. 1.

(2) See Ziegelbauer, *Historia. Rei Litterariæ Ord. S. Bened.* A work of great learning in four quarto vols. The first chapter of tome 1st. which contains a general view of the history of the order is highly interesting. See also on the subject of the mediæval libraries, a valuable article by F. Cahier, in the *Annales de la Philosophie Chrétienne*. What the Benedictines have done for learning in England may be seen in Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*, with its valuable preface by Sir John Marsham, so eulogistically quoted by Helyot, *Hist. des Ordres Monast.* Sir John was a Protestant, but superior to most of the prejudices of his co-religionists. See also Bishop Tanner's *Notitia Monastica* and Steven's *History of Monasteries*.

(3) *Benedicere digneris, Domine, hoc Scriptorium famulorum tuorum, ut quidquid scriptum fuerit sensu capiant, opere perficiant.* D'Achery, notes de l'éditn. de Guibert de Nogent.

employed, none being appointed except the most skilful and most careful penmen. How well they executed the duty assigned to them, may be seen in the valuable MSS. which are still preserved in our public libraries. How many, not content with simply reproducing the originals confided to them, have embellished their labours by those exquisite illuminations which are still the delight and despair of successive generations of artists?

The monks thus employed were bound to observe the strictest silence, to devote all their attention to the work before them, to select correct originals, and to impress themselves with a full sense of the importance of their labours.

The correction of the text, by comparison with the best editions, formed another and important branch of monastic duty. To this only the élite of the community were admitted, and this they readily performed, under the influence of the two-fold motive of the love of God and the love of learning.

The revision of the Bible naturally occupied a prominent place, and (to name only two instances out of many) we find this duty undertaken by Alcuin, at the request of Charlemagne; and on a still vaster scale, by the monks of Cîteaux. (1) Lupus of Ferrières revises the MSS. of Sallust, Cicero, and Macrobius; (2) the Abbott Gerbert that of Pliny (3) and St. Anselm, while still an inmate of the Abbey of Bec, employs himself in labours of a similar kind. Nothing would be easier than to multiply instances of this kind.

After the contents of the books came the binding, and here again the solicitude of the monks displays itself. Thus we find that the Benedictines of the Abbey of St. Bertin succeeded in obtaining from Charlemagne, a diploma authorising them to enjoy an unlimited right of hunting in the

(1) On the Scriptorium, see Du Cange, Glossarium in voc, Scriptorium Scriptores et Scriptionale,

(2) Ep. 104, 69. (3) Ep. 7. (4) Ep. I. i. 43.

imperial domains, with the express object of securing an adequate supply of leather for binding purposes. (1) The example of Charlemagne was followed by various feudal lords, and some even assigned a fixed revenue for this purpose. (2)

When, at a later period, the labours of the copyist were superseded by the invention of printing, Faust, Schafer, and Caxton, found no more enlightened or more generous patrons than the Benedictines of Germany and England. (3) I might pursue this subject further, and shew that what the Benedictines have done for literature they have also done for art, and that architecture, sculpture, painting, and music have received from them their strongest support. I think, however, it will be more satisfactory that I should present, in extenso, the views entertained, on this subject, by some of the most eminent of modern writers, English and foreign, Catholic and non-Catholic. These opinions I have collected, as the result of considerable reading on this subject: many being now translated from Latin, French, &c. will probably be new to the English reader, and all, as the expression of great minds on a great theme, must necessarily command respect. They will be found at the end of this chapter.

Resuming the thread of the Benedictine Annals, we find the Order, from the period of the Cistercian Reform (Circa. 1110), adhere, with more or less fidelity, to the Rule of its founder. Candour compels us to admit that the tendency on the whole, was rather towards *less* than *more*. The best proof

(1) Mabillon, *De re diplom.* Several modern writers and among them Robertson comment on this hunting as a very singular occupation for monks. "Fine, dashing fellows these monks, say they, who instead of muttering their Pater Nosters in their cells, mounted their chargers and rode boldly across country, picking off stags and wild boars!" A learned Protestant has well shewn how singularly disingenuous this criticism is. See Maitland's "Dark Ages."

(2) So we read of Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, who made such a grant in favour of the Abbey of Notre Dame de Saines. (Lebeuf Diss. t. ii.)

(3) See Ziegelbauer (*loc. cit.*): Maittaire *Annales Typographici*; Montfaucon, *Diarium Italicum*, Knight's *Life of Caxton*, &c.

of the fact is to be found in the various ineffectual attempts at reform made by successive popes and councils. Thus we find the Council of Vienne, in 1311, commanding the monks to return to the Rule, and to display more of its spirit in their lives. The same Council forbade them to receive any novice into their monasteries who should be under the age of twenty years, and further enjoins them to maintain the ancient reputation of their schools, by providing suitable masters. The thunders of the Church fell harmlessly on the ears of the monks.

The matter is therefore taken up by the Sovereign Pontiff, Benedict XII., and, under his auspices, a great Council of Abbots is held, in 1336, at which important reforms were resolved on. This decision had the effect of giving a great impetus to the literary labours of the monks, but in other respects, it seems to have failed in its object. The subject was revived at the Council of Constance, in 1416; and lastly at the Council of Trent, in its 25th Session, Chapter 21. All these attempts at reform clearly shew how deeply the seeds of decay had sunk into the monastic body.

It is remarkable, that during the great religious rebellion of the sixteenth century, when a monk was rending the Church asunder, the Benedictines are never once heard of. They enjoyed their "*otium cum dignitate*," rested and were thankful, without troubling themselves about the strife which was raging around them.

But a great revival was at hand, and the seventeenth century was destined to see the order recover all its ancient glory.

In this path, France, the eldest daughter of the Church, led the van.

At the commencement of the seventeenth century, was

organised the Congregation of St. Vannes, which soon attracted all the Benedictines of Alsace, Lorraine, &c.

This body has produced many eminent men, of whom, the most distinguished is Calmet, a name familiar to all Biblical scholars. After rendering great services to the Church, and to society, it was destined to be, in turn, absorbed in the famous Congregation of St. Maur, the most illustrious of all the Benedictine bodies. The St. Maur branch started into existence under the highest possible auspices, the sanction of the Sovereign Pontiff, Urban VIII., and of Cardinal Richelieu, the great minister of Louis XIII., and founder of the Sorbonne.

What these eminent men have done for learning and religion, shall best be seen in the following pages, in which I intend examining their lives and writings.

Yet even here, the spirit of decay soon declared itself. Jansenism, that strange attempt to effect an alliance between Rome and Geneva, which fascinated the most gifted intellects, from Pascal to De Rancé, gradually crept in, and the fate of St. Maur was sealed. (1)

As regards the decline of the monastic bodies, it may be attributed to the influence of the excessive wealth of many, if not of most of the religious houses. If a rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of Heaven, what shall we say of a monk who is not only rich, but who is rich after binding himself solemnly to remain poor? The wealth thus acquired was, no doubt, corporate property; but the evil remains that, by it, the monk was disturbed in his spiritual exercises, and become entangled in the meshes of worldly cares and anxieties.

(1) On the history of the Benedictine Order, see the "Acta Sanctorum," and also the "Annales Ordinis Sancti Benedicti," the former by D'Achery, with prefaces by Mabillon, the latter by Mabillon only. See also Lucas Holstenius, Præf. ad "Codex Regularum Monasticarum." Ziegelbauer may be consulted for all that relates to the literary history of the Order. Hist. Rei. Lit. Ord. S. Bened. Helyot, Hist. des Ordres Monastiques.

Another cause was the fatal habit of conferring the government of abbeys on men who were neither monks nor even simple clerks, as frequently happened. These were styled "Commendatory Abbots," and have done more to ruin monasticism than all the invasions of Goths, Vandals, Saracens, Lombards or Normans.

In order to form a correct estimate of the monks, we must keep these facts distinctly before our minds; so that we may thus be in a position to judge the merits and failings, the lights and shades of the monastic life. That the former vastly preponderate over the latter, will be the conclusion of all candid minds.

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*Opinions of Various Eminent Writers on the Services Rendered to Learning and Civilization by the Monks, and in a special manner, by the Benedictines.*

THESE writers may be divided into two classes, viz.: the non-Catholic or anti-Catholic, and the Catholic. I shall begin with the former.

Brucker, in his great "History of Philosophy," speaking of the sixth century, and of the dangers to which civilization was then exposed, says, "Alone in that age, the Community of St. Benedict, devoting itself to the cultivation of learning, received with open arms the exiled Muses, and afforded a secure retreat to Philosophy, degraded, outraged and banished (like all the other branches of knowledge) by the

“barbarians.” The following are Brucker’s words, which are even stronger in the original, than I have been able to render them in the translation: — “Sola divi Benedicti familia, litterarum cultui dedita, exules Musas patentibus ulnis amplexa, profugam cum reliquis litteris Philosophiam cultu, squaloreque deformem vixque dignoscendam recepit, et in amplexus admisit suos.” *Histor. Crit. Phil.* t. 111.

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Gibbon says, “Posterity must gratefully acknowledge that the monuments of Greek and Roman literature have been preserved and multiplied by their indefatigable pens.” *Decline and Fall*, c. 37. A further testimony Gibbon bears, by the use he so constantly makes of the labours of the Benedictine historians.

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Voltaire thus expresses himself:—

“It was long a source of consolation for the human race, that there should be retreats open to all who wished to escape the terrors of the Goths and Vandals. All who were not masters became slaves. The quiet of the cloister afforded protection, at once, from the caprices of despotism and the horrors of war. Whatever knowledge had survived, was to be found in the monasteries. Amid the many religious orders which arose, the Benedictines always held the first place. Many useful inventions were introduced by the monks, who besides were skilful agriculturists, sang the praises of the Lord, lived soberly, practised hospitality, and served by their example, to raise the tone of society in an age of violence and barbarism.” *Essai Sur les Mœurs*.

In the famous "Cyclopædia of D'Alembert and Diderot," we read as follows, under the head of "Benedictines:"

"The Order of St. Benedict has flourished ever since its foundation. It has existed during a period of 1300 years, with a splendour seldom obscured, and has been equally distinguished for learning and piety. It was the asylum of letters even when they seemed least likely to have any, and has given to the Church an immense number of saints, of sovereign pontiffs, of cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, &c.

" . . . . . The Congregation of St. Maur, in France, was established in 1621, and has since maintained itself with great glory. It has produced men whose names can never perish in the republic of letters, who have given us excellent editions of nearly all the Fathers of the Church, and who are still distinguished for learning and piety."

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"The Benedictine Monks," says Guizot (*Civilisation en France*), "have cleared the soil of Europe. This they have done on a grand scale, uniting agriculture with preaching. A little colony of monks started from the parent establishment, arrived in some wild uncultivated region, often in the very midst of a population still pagan; in Germany, for example, or Bretagne, and there, at once, missionaries and labourers, accomplished their twofold task, which was frequently as dangerous as it was difficult."

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"We are apt," says Warton (2nd Dissertation prefixed to his "History of English Poetry"), "to pass a general and undistinguishing censure on the monks, and to suppose



“their foundations to have been the retreats of illiterate indolence at every period of time. But it should be remembered that our universities, about the time of the Norman Conquest, were in a low condition, while the monasteries contained ample endowments and accommodations, and were the only respectable seminaries of literature . . . . . The most eminent scholars which England produced, both in philosophy and humanity, before and even below the twelfth century, were educated in our religious houses.”

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Dugald Stuart, expresses himself in still stronger terms : “I shall content myself with remarking the important effects produced by the numerous monastic establishments, all over the Christian world, in preserving, amidst the general wreck, the inestimable remains of Greek and Roman refinement, and in keeping alive, during so many centuries, those scattered sparks of truth, and of science, which were afterwards to kindle into so bright a flame.

“ . . . . . To the monks we are indebted for the *most precious advantages that we now enjoy.*” Preliminary Dissertation Prefixed to Encyclopædia Britannica.

“To the monks,” says Kemble (Saxons in England, vol. 2), “England owed the more accurate calculations which enabled the divisions of time and seasons to be duly settled. The decency, nay, even splendour of the religious services were maintained by their skilful arrangements. Painting, sculpture, and architecture were made familiar through their efforts, and the best examples of these civilizing arts were furnished by their churches and monasteries. It is probable that their lands, in general, supplied the best

“specimens of cultivation, and that the leisure of the cloister  
 “was often bestowed in acquiring the art of healing, so  
 “valuable in a rude state of society. Their MSS. yet attract  
 “our attention by the exquisite beauty of the execution,”  
 &c. &c.

The services rendered to English agriculture by the Benedictines, are amply attested by the records of “Domesday Survey.” See also Turner’s “Anglo Saxons,” vol. 4.

Neander (Church History, vol. 7,) thus speaks of the monks: “They restored peace between contending parties, “reconciled enemies, and made collections for the poor. The “monasteries were seats for the promotion of various trades, “arts and sciences. The gains accruing from the union of “the labours of many, were often employed for alleviating “the distress of many. In great famines, thousands obtained, “from monasteries of note, the means of support, and were “rescued from impending starvation.”

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At Corbey, in Germany, was a celebrated Benedictine Abbey, where, about a century ago, a large portion of the lost Annals of Tacitus was recovered. Writing of this, in one of his letters to Magliabecchi, Leibnitz says, (I translate from the Latin,) “The Abbey of Corbey, on the Weser, “in my neighbourhood, equally remarkable for the learning “and piety of its monks, was the instrument, in the hands of “Providence, for carrying the lamp of Faith throughout the “whole of Northern Europe.” “Fidei lumen per totum “Septentrionem sparsit.” What Leibnitz here says of Corbey, might confidently be asserted of the Benedictine Abbeys throughout the whole of Germany. “We can not,” says Dunham (History of the Germanic Empire), “shut our eyes

“to the fact, that, for improvement in agriculture, the Germanic Empire was indebted to the monks. In whatever place these extraordinary men were located, they soon showed what could be effected by willing minds, still further influenced by the sacred obligations of duty. From incontestable evidence, we know that luxuriant meadows were soon made to start up from the fens, and ample harvests to wave on the sandy plain, or the bleak mountain.”

Dr. Maitland (“Dark Ages,” Preface, p. ii.) says, with reference to the failings of the monks, “it appears to be the testimony of history that the monks and clergy, whether bad or good in themselves, *were in all times and places better than other people.*”

England’s greatest moralist thus speaks, on this subject, “Those retreats of prayer and contemplation have something so congenial to the mind of man, that perhaps there is scarcely one that does not purpose to close his life, in pious abstraction, with a few associates as serious as himself.”

I might easily multiply extracts from the works of writers of this class, I might quote Collier, Wood, Hearne, Drake, Browne, Willis, Hallam, &c.; but I forbear. Enough has probably been here reproduced to shew what some of the greatest writers, outside the pale of the Church, have thought of the monks, and particularly of the Benedictines.

I cannot, however, deny myself the pleasure of quoting, in closing this portion of the evidence which I have collected on the subject of Monasticism, two more distinguished writers. One is the greatest thinker that England has produced since the days of Locke; the other, one of the most celebrated of England’s later poets.

Speaking of the Benedictine historians, Mr. Stuart Mill says (Edinburgh Review, January 1844):

“ With respect to the charge so often made, against French historians, of superficiality and want of research, it is a strange accusation against the country which has produced the Benedictines.” Further on, Mr. Mill says of the clergy and monks, “ that they were the preservers of all letters and all culture, of the writings, and even the traditions of literary antiquity *is too evident to have been ever disputed.* But for them, there would have been a complete break in Western Europe, between the ancient and modern world. Books would have disappeared, and even Christianity itself (if it survived at all) would have existed merely as another form of the old barbarous superstitions. Some too are aware of the services rendered even to material civilization by the monastic associations of Italy and France, after the great reform by St. Benedict. Unlike the useless communities of contemplative ascetics, in the East, (1) they were diligent in tilling the earth and fabricating useful products. They knew and taught that temporal work may also be a spiritual exercise, and protected, by their sacred character, from degradation, they set the first example to Europe of industry conducted, on a large scale, by free labour. Not only was the Church, in the middle ages, a beneficent institution, it was the only means, capable of being now assigned, by which Europe could have been reclaimed from barbarism.”

The whole of this article, bearing as it does on every page, the impress of Mr. Mill's vigorous mind and impartial judgment, deserves a careful and attentive perusal.

After this splendid tribute to the monks, by England's great philosopher, it is scarcely necessary to reply to Adam Smith, who endeavours to rob them of the glory they so

(1) Here it must be admitted that Mr. Mill, in his desire to be just to the West, has been a little unjust to the East. The importance of labour, both mental and physical, was recognized, both in the East and West, although it was reserved for the latter to give the principle its final development. Eastern nature, however, often proved stronger than Eastern Rules, as Milman remarks,

justly acquired, as the almoners of the middle ages. The monks, says this writer, had no choice but to be generous, they lived in an age of commercial stagnation, and must either have given their goods away or allowed them to perish. A strange opinion this from the man who has said :— “He who causes two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before is a benefactor to mankind.” The monks reclaimed Europe and this is their reward ! Adam Smith, however, does not tell us when markets for the sale of the necessities of life ceased to exist in the great cities of Italy and Gaul. St. Benedict, on the other hand, expressly tells us that such markets existed, for he prescribes, in the Rule, that whenever it may be necessary to sell any of the products of the monastery, no profit must be sought, but the article shall be sold at a little less than its real value, out of a pure spirit of charity.

The Goths, Vandals, and Lombards, no doubt inflicted terrible evils on society, but they are frequently painted blacker than they were. In the history of Jornandes, himself a Goth, and (like all the historians of those times) a monk, we find no evidence of any such destructive rage. (1)

The Lombards were the founders of modern commerce, and the well known name which they bequeathed to a street in the centre of England’s great commercial capital still attests the traditions which exist on the subject. (2)

(1) See Jornandes, *De Rebus Geticis*. Jornandes (more correctly Jordanes) lived in the 6th century. Some say he was Bishop of Ravenna ; but Muratori observes that there is no trace of any bishop of that name in the Archives of Ravenna. His history is an abbreviation of a more copious one by Cassiodorus, now lost. His account of the Goths and their love of learning reads like a romance. A certain Decineus was their preceptor, and taught them Ethics, Physics, Logic, Astronomy—*omnem pene philosophiam eos instruxit. Videres unum cæli positionem, alium herbarum, frugumque, explorare naturas. Hæc et multa alia* Diceneus, &c. *De Reb. Get. C. xi. ap. Muratori, Rerum Italic. Scriptores, t. 1.* There were two barbarian bishops at the Council of Nice, one of them was a Goth, Socrates, *Hist. Ecc. L. ii. C. 41.*

(2) For the early history of the Lombards, see Paulus Diaconus, *De Gestis Longob.*

We may, therefore, feel assured that, had the monks been disposed to traffic in the products of their labour, they would have had no difficulty to contend with from the absence of a market for their goods.

I shall close this series of extracts by quoting the following lines from Wordsworth :—

A gentle life spreads round the holy spires,  
Where'er they rise, the sylvan waste retires,  
And æry harvests crown the fertile lea.  
But mark how gladly through their own domains,  
The monks relax or break these iron chains,  
While mercy, uttering, through their voice, a sound  
Echoed in Heaven, cries out, " Ye chiefs, abate  
These legalized oppressions ! Man whose name  
And nature God disdained not ; man whose soul  
Christ died for, can not forfeit his high claim  
To live and move, exempt from all control,  
Which fellow-feeling doth not mitigate.

Record we too, with just and faithful pen,  
That many hooded cenobites there are  
Who, in their private cells, have yet a care  
Of public quiet ; unambitious men,  
Connseillers for the world : of piercing ken,  
Whose fervent exhortations from afar  
Move princes to their duty, peace or war ;  
And oft-times in the most forbidding den  
Of solitude, with love of science strong ;  
How patiently the yoke of thought they bear !  
How subtly glide its finest threads along !  
Spirits that crowd the intellectual sphere  
With mazy boundaries, as the astronomer,  
With orb and cycle, girds the starry throng.

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I now come to the second class, viz. : that of Catholic writers who have left on record their opinions on this subject.

Here there is naturally an "embarras de richesses," and on this account I shall content myself with quoting only a few of the more eminent. The opinions of the rest may be fairly assumed. Speaking of the conversion of England by St. Augustin (who, according to the best authority, was a

Benedictine monk) Dr. Lingard says: "It was the boast or the consolation of the Greeks that, if they had been subdued by the superior fortune of Rome, Rome in her turn had yielded to them the empire of learning and the arts.

'Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes  
Intulit agresti Latio.'

"The history of the fifth and sixth centuries present an almost similar revolution. The fierce valour of the Northern barbarians annihilated the temporal power of Rome, and the religion of Rome triumphed over the gods of the barbarians.

"Scarcely had the Saxons obtained the undisputed possession of their conquests, when a private monk conceived the bold but benevolent design of reducing these savage warriors under the obedience of the Gospel. . . . .  
"The superior cultivation of several English Counties is originally owing to the labours of the monks, who, at this early period, were the parents of agriculture as well as of the arts." (*Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, Vol. 1.)

The triumph of Augustin was the more illustrious as the materials on which he worked were, of all, the most unpromising. By the unanimous testimony of historians, the Saxons were of all the barbarous tribes that overran the provinces of the Roman Empire, the fiercest and most cruel. See on this subject, *Ammian Marcel*, L. xxviii. *Procop. De. Bel. Goth.* L. iv. *Julian, Oratio in laud Constant.* *Zozimus*, *Paulus Orosius*, *Sidon Appolin*, L. vii. c. 6: *Hume*, *Hist. of Eng.* C. i., *Lingard*, *Hist. of Eng.* C. ii. &c.

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We are indebted to the pen of one of the greatest of modern monks for a glimpse of the interior of a monastery. *Lacordaire* thus writes: "At the sound of a bell, all the doors of the cloister were opened, with a kind of respectful

"gentleness. Calm old men, whose footsteps were waking the  
 "echos of the grave ; men of precocious maturity, youths on  
 "whose brows the spirit of early penance had set a seal of  
 "beauty which the world knows not, nearly all the ages of  
 "man are represented together, beneath the same habit  
 "The cell of each cœnobite was poor ; just large enough to  
 "admit of a bed of straw, a table and two chairs. A crucifix  
 "and a few pious images constituted its only decoration.  
 "From this tomb which he occupied, during his mortal  
 "years, the religious passed on to the tomb which is the portal  
 "of immortality. Even there, he was not separated from  
 "his brethren, living and dead. He was wrapped in his habit  
 "and laid beneath the floor of the choir, his dust was mingled  
 "with that of his ancestors, while the praises of the Lord  
 "sung by his contemporaries and descendants of the cloister  
 "still thrilled whatever remained of feeling in his relics.  
 "Oh ! quiet and holy houses ! Men have built splendid  
 "palaces, they have raised sublime sepultures, they have  
 "erected to God, temples of almost Divine beauty, but the  
 "art and the heart of man have never more abundantly dis-  
 "played their treasures than in the creation of the  
 "monastery."

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"The Abbeyes of the 7th century says M. Ozanam,  
 "(Civilisation chez les Francs) with their population of 300  
 "or 500 monks, were so many fortresses whose walls repelled  
 "the invasions of the infidels. Their lines extended from  
 "the banks of the Somme to those of the Rhine, encircling  
 "Austrasia on the north, separating it from pagan countries,  
 "and enclosing it within the enlarged boundaries of  
 "Christendom.

"The abbeyes were immovable colonies in the midst of  
 "the ever moving colonies of the country. Those societies



“which never died, which did not abdicate, like the bishops,  
 “which did not suffer themselves to be dragged, like them, in  
 “the train of kings, which better than the bishops, resisted  
 “all attempts at fraud and violence: those obedient, chaste,  
 “laborious societies amazed the barbarians, impressed them  
 “by their good deeds, and finally fixed them in the soil, a  
 “great step towards civilizing them.

“We have already considered the Abbeys as schools of  
 “sacred and profane learning: they were also schools of  
 “industry and agriculture which preserved in their work-  
 “shops (ateliers) all the arts of antiquity and which pur-  
 “sued, with all the indomitable perseverance of the Romans,  
 “the task of reclaiming the soil.”

I shall close my citations by an extract from Chateau-  
 briand.

It is from his great historical work, “*Etudes Histori-  
 ques*,” tome iii.

“Nothing can be conceived more favourable to intellectual  
 “activity and personal independence than the life of a  
 “cœnobite. A religious community represented an artificial  
 “family ever in its prime, and which (unlike the ordinary  
 “family) was exempt from the weaknesses incidental to the  
 “first and last ages of man. It knew nothing of the periods  
 “of pupillage and minority, and of the many miseries in-  
 “separable from female infirmity. This family which never  
 “died, constantly increased its property, without any fear  
 “of losing it, and, freed from the cares of the world, wielded  
 “a wondrous influence on society.

“At the present day, when society has no longer to com-  
 “plain of the spectacle of unchangeable proprietary rights, of  
 “celibacy injurious to population, and of the abuses of monastic  
 “power, men judge impartially institutions which were, in  
 “many respects, useful to the human race, at periods of great  
 “social transitions.

"The monasteries became so many fortresses where civil-  
 "zation found an asylum under the banner of some saint.  
 "The highest culture of the intellect was thus preserved, with  
 "philosophical truth which in turn, sprang from religious  
 "truth. Political truth, or liberty, found, at once, an inter-  
 "preter and an accomplice in the independence of the monk,  
 "who examined everything, said everything, and feared  
 "nothing. Those great discoveries of which Europe is so  
 "proud, could never have been made in a barbarous society.  
 "Without the inviolability and the leisure of the cloister,  
 "neither the books nor the languages of antiquity would have  
 "come down to us, and the chain which binds the past to the  
 "present would have been rent assunder. Astronomy, arith-  
 "metic, geometry, civil law, physics and medicine, the study  
 "of the profane authors, grammar and humanity, all the arts  
 "were taught by an unbroken series of masters, from the first  
 "times of Clovis down to the days when the universities, them-  
 "selves the creation of religion, caught up the lamp of learning  
 "from the hands of the monks. To establish this fact it suffices to  
 "name Alcuin, Anghilbert, Eginhard, Téghan, Lupus of Fer-  
 "rières, Eric of Auxerre, Hincmar, Odo of Cluny, Gherbert,  
 "Abbo, Fulbert. The last name brings us to the reign of  
 "Robert, second king of the third race. New religious orders  
 "then sprung up, and Cluny could no longer boast the proud  
 "privilege of being almost the only abode of learning. (1)

(1) The following passage from M. Ozanam's "Civilisation au Vme. Siècle, will probably be read with interest, confirming, as it does Chateaubriand's view of the intellectual condition of the "Middle Ages."

"Those know but little of the Middle Ages who can only see in them one  
 "long night, during which priests are keeping watch over troops of slaves.  
 "Yet one of these slandered priests was named Anselm, and he was troubled  
 "with the desire of finding the shortest proof of the existence of God. This  
 "thought alone sufficed to make him a great metaphysician, to attract disciples,  
 "to rouse up opponents and to plunge the Christian mind into the controversy  
 "which was destined to marshal Abelard against Bernard, and to drive many  
 "an intellect to the last excess of temerity. . . .

"St. Thomas wrote, on the origin of laws, on the legitimate share of demo-  
 "cracy in political affairs, on tyranny and insurrection. pages which have start-

“ We know all that was done relative to books. Sometimes  
 “ the monks multiplied them, either spontaneously or by order ;  
 “ sometimes they copied them through a spirit of penance.  
 “ Thus Livy was copied, during Lent, as an act of mortification.  
 “ At the same time, it is unfortunately but too true that  
 “ the text of valuable MSS. was sometimes erased, in order to  
 “ substitute some act of donation or some scholastic lucubration.  
 “ In the catalogue of the library of the Abbey of St. Riquier  
 “ (date 831) we see mention made of copies of Homer, Virgil,  
 “ and Cicero. In the tenth century, reference is made to the  
 “ fact that copies of Cæsar, Livy, Virgil and Lucan, were pre-  
 “ served in the library of Reims ; the Abbey of St. Benignus  
 “ of Dijon, could boast of a Horace. At that of St. Benedict,  
 “ on the Loire, each scholar (there were 5000 of them in the  
 “ school of the monastery) presented his master with two  
 “ volumes of some useful work, as a fee. Lupus of Ferrières  
 “ caused the text of Pliny to be corrected, from a defective  
 “ MS. he also sent to Rome copies of Suetonius and of Quintus  
 “ Curtius.

“ In the Abbey of Fleury there was a copy of Cicero “ De  
 “ Re Publica,” which has only been recovered in our own days,  
 “ in an imperfect condition.

“ I do not recollect to have seen, in any of these ancient  
 “ catalogues of the monastic libraries of France, mention made  
 “ of a single copy of Tacitus.

“ led a later age, by their boldness. Never was thought more free than in the  
 “ period of its supposed bondage. It had not only liberty :—It had power also.  
 “ Its temples, the universities, were endowed by Pope and Emperor. It possessed  
 “ laws, magistracies, and a studious, but turbulent people.

“ An historian of the time gave Christendom three capitals :—Rome, of  
 “ religion ; Aix-la-Chapelle, of empire ; Paris, of intellect.”

As regards St. Anselm's proof of the existence of God (referred to by M.  
 Ozanam) I may observe that it has been revived by the “ Father of Modern  
 Philosophy,” Des Cartes ; has been re-asserted by Leibnitz ; not rejected by  
 Kant, revived, in another form, by Schelling and Hegel, and has been lately  
 fully discussed by M. C. De Rémusat.

Des Cartes must have been an attentive reader of the Fathers, as he found,  
 in St. Augustin the germ of his famous principle—*Cogito ergo sum*.

“The arts of music, painting, engraving, and of architecture, particularly, owe immense obligations to ecclesiastics.

“Charlemagne displayed that natural aptitude for music, which is still an inheritance of the German people. (1) He invited musicians from Rome, and presided himself at the musical services, in his chapel, where he indicated, by a wave of his hand or of a wand whose turn it was to sing.

“There were schools of music, in which the monks gave lessons on the organ and various other instruments, both stringed and wind.

“The art of engraving on precious stones was not lost in the eighth and ninth centuries. Heldric, Abbot of St. Germain d’Auxerre, was a skilful painter; Tutilon, monk of St. Gall, exercised at Metz the art of a sculptor and engraver.

“What we call the Lombard style of architecture is connected with the religious epoch of Charlemagne. The monk of Gozze was a skilful architect of the tenth century. Later still, what is incorrectly styled the “Gothic” architecture, owed its chief glories in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, to ecclesiastics, abbots, monks, and certain men affiliated to religious houses.”

I must here close my series of extracts.

(1) The juxtaposition of the names of Charlemagne and the German people, is intelligible only when we bear in mind that the Franks were originally a German tribe, that Charlemagne ruled a large portion of Germany, and that the capital of his empire was in Germany (at Aachen; Gallice, Aix-la-Chapelle) and not in France.

## POPE ST. GREGORY THE GREAT.

Behold a pupil of the monkish gown  
 Mirror of Pontiffs! Indigent Renown  
 Might range the starry ether for a crown  
 Equal to *his* deserts, who, like the year,  
 Pours forth his bounty : like the day, doth cheer,  
 And awes like night, with mercy-tempered frown.  
 Ease, from this noble miser of his time  
 No moment steals, pain narrows not his cares.

"In the person of Gregory the Great, monasticism ascended "the papal throne." (1) Never has the world beheld a nobler type, both of monk and pontiff. Descended, like St. Benedict, from the illustrious Gens Anicia, he has added fresh lustre to that noble name, by the splendour of his virtues, and the eminent services which he has rendered to the Church, and to society. By all who speak the English tongue, the name of Gregory, the "Spiritual Conqueror of England," (2) must ever be mentioned with mingled feelings of gratitude and reverence.

Gregory was born at Rome, A.D. 540; was elected to fill the chair of Peter, in 590, and died in 604, at the comparatively early age of 64 years.

It is not compatible with the limits which I propose to myself, to enter in detail into the events of his pontificate. Nor is it necessary that I should, bearing in mind the fact that the life of this illustrious pontiff has already been written by men of the highest ability. (3)

(1) Milman's *Latin Christianity*. (2) Gibbon.

(3) The earliest lives of Gregory, are those written by John the Deacon, and Paul the Deacon, both monks of Monte Cassino, and which have been lately prefixed to the excellent edition of the Pontiff's Works, published by the Abbé Migne. Besides these, we have "Platina in Gregorio;" F. Maimbourg's "*Histoire du Pontificat de Gregoire le Grand*;" Maimbourg was a Jesuit, and has been praised both by Bayle and Voltaire; Dom Remy Ceillier, *Histoire des Auteurs Ecclesiastiques*, t. 17; Sainte-Marthe *Vie de St. Gregoire*; Dupin, *Bibliothèque des Auteurs Ecclesiast.*, t. 5; Artaud de Montor, *Hist. des Papes*; Fleury, *Hist. eccles.* t. 7—8; Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, c. 45; Bayle; Moreri, Tiraboschi, &c.

To estimate correctly the merits of Gregory, we must take account of the disastrous state of Italy when he was called to the chief command in the Church. Nothing could possibly appear more forlorn and hopeless than the condition of Rome at that period (A.D. 590). Wars, fires, famine, sieges by Goths, Vandals and Greeks, such were the dangers which Gregory faced and conquered. The Pontiff, like the Apostle, is exposed to perils of all kinds, and triumphs over all. But the greatest scourge from which he suffered, was the blind fury of the Lombards, who, for seven-and-twenty years, were the terror of Rome, and who, according to a contemporary writer, seemed like "the sword drawn from its scabbard, in order to destroy the remnant of the human race."

Against these fierce barbarians, Gregory defends the Eternal City, which the Byzantine Emperor was too feeble or too indolent to protect. Here we trace the first act of civil sovereignty performed by a Roman Pontiff.

Gregory subdues the Lombards, but he finds his surest weapon in the cross of Jesus. The barbarian bends his haughty head beneath the gentle yoke of Christ,<sup>(1)</sup> and the tranquillity of Rome is assured.

Such were Gregory's triumphs in the South. In the North, the same peaceful arms were crowned with the same glorious victory. "The conquest of Britain," says Gibbon, "reflects less glory on the name of Cæsar, than on that of Gregory the First."<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Paulus Diac. De Gest. Longob. L. iv. c. 6.

Paul draws a flattering picture of the internal administration of the Lombards. *Within*, all is "couleur de rose," and the traveller, as in ancient Ireland, might roam at ease through the Lombard domain. Ibid. L. iii. c. 16.

(2) Decline and Fall, c. xlv.

Let us hear a distinguished Protestant historian on this memorable act of Papal aggression: "In no country was Christianity so manifestly the parent of civilization as among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors." Milman's Latin Christianity, V. ii. Of Monasticism he says, "No form of Christianity could

We must pass rapidly over the other events in this Pontiff's life. Suffice it to say that his vigilance in providing the various churches with suitable pastors, his unbounded charity to the poor, his wise administration of the revenues of the Holy See, his firmness in resisting certain acts of the Emperor Maurice, as well as the ambition of the Greek patriarch, John, the Faster, his large and liberal views as regards both religious and political matters, his zeal in watching over the due celebration of the sacred mysteries, his services to the cause of sacred music, and the extent, variety and importance of his writings, all mark him out as one of the grandest of historical figures.

When I speak of his "liberal" views, I allude to the following incidents. The Bishop of Terracina, in an access of indiscreet zeal, seizes the Jewish Synagogue, in order to convert it into a Christian temple. Gregory protests, orders the Synagogue to be restored, and recommends greater forbearance in future. Ample evidence of the same tolerant disposition will be found in his correspondence with St. Augustin, the Apostle of England.

A certain lady, Ammonia by name, leaves considerable property to the Church, to the great prejudice of her son. The latter appeals to Gregory for redress. The Pontiff orders the property to be restored to the natural heir.(1)

In politics, he is still more liberal, and in reading what he has written on the rights of man, we seem to have before us the words of the "Contrat Social," or the "Declaration of "American Independence."(2)

be so well suited for its high purposes, at that time, or tend so powerfully to promote civilization, as well as religion." The opinion that Britain was originally converted by St. Paul, he rejects as utterly untenable. Ibid.

(1) Thomassin. *vetus ac nova Discip.* Eccles. P. iii., L. i. C. 4.

(2) *Homines quos ab initio natura liberos protulit, et jus gentium jugo substituit servitutis.* Ep. vi. 12. Compare Rousseau, (*Contrat Social*) *L'homme est né libre; et partout il est dans les fers!*" The Pontiff has clearly anticipated the philosopher. See also a decree of Louis Hutin: "Since all men are,

The pen of Gregory was the most prolific ever wielded by a Roman Pontiff. No other occupant of the Chair of Peter has even approached him in the extent, variety and importance of his writings. Hence he is styled by Bossuet, "the most learned of popes," (*le plus savant des papes*,) and Muratori says, "that he alone can rival the most illustrious "men of antiquity, both in learning and piety." (1)

But in the intellectual, as in the physical world, the brightest sunshine is attended by the darkest shade. So was it with Gregory. "Censure," says Swift, "is the tax a man "pays to the public for being eminent." The eminence of Gregory was too marked to justify the belief that he could escape paying a very heavy portion of this tax. Accordingly we need not be surprised to find that this illustrious pontiff has, in relation to one subject at least, been pelted with all the choicest epithets in the vocabulary of abuse. I allude to his supposed hostility to learning and the Muses. One would have thought that the mere fact of this calumny requiring the incubation of no fewer than six centuries to enable it to see the light, would alone have sufficed to consign it to that place to which all lies and unrealities necessarily gravitate. But no: "Se von e vero, e ben trovato;" if the facts be against it, so much the worse for the facts, say the critics.

The first writer who mentions this report is John of Salisbury, who, as I have already stated, is separated from

by Nature, born free, we ordain, &c. (*Ordonnances des rois de France*, t. 1.) When we bear in mind the peculiar character of the French constitution, viz. that of a "monarchy founded by bishops," we shall have little difficulty in tracing in this and similar declarations, the guiding influence of the Church, who always threw her authority into the scale on the people's side. This fact seems to have escaped the attention of many modern liberals.

(1) Qui unus cum præcipuis totius antiquitatis, ut pietate, ita et litterarum gloriâ, certare potuit. *Antiq. Ital. Diss.* 43. Compare Tiraboschi: Queste e tante altre gloriose imprese del suo pontificato ne han renduto il nome immortale, e sempre ne renderan la memoria venerabile e cara a tutti coloro che del vero merito son saggi ed imparziali conoscitori. *Storia della letteratura Italiana*, t. iii. L. 2. Cave says Gregory was "Magnus a rebus gestis dictus," *Hist. Lit.* Gibbon's account of Gregory is, *on the whole*, candid and highly favourable: see *Decline and Fall*, c. 45.



Gregory by an interval of some six hundred years! Where did John of Salisbury discover this wonderful "fact," unknown to all previous writers? John answers for it, but who answers for John? (1) This apparently random statement has been adopted by several eminent writers of modern times, Brucker, Hume, and, in our own day, by M. Giesebrecht, author of a valuable work on early Italian literature. (2) Gibbon was too keen a critic, too skilful in the manipulation of historical data not to perceive the weakness of the evidence on which the charge against Gregory rests. Therefore, "though willing to wound," he is yet "afraid to strike." He thus records a reluctant verdict of acquittal.

"It is commonly believed that Pope Gregory the First "attacked the temples and mutilated the statues of the "city; that, by the command of the barbarian, the Palatine library was reduced to ashes, and that the history of

(1) The following are John of Salisbury's words: "Ad hæc doctor, sanctissimus ille, Gregorius, qui melleo predicationis imbre, totam rigavit et inebriavit ecclesiam, non modo mathesin jussit ab aulâ recedere, sed, *ut traditur a majoribus*, incendio dedit probatæ lectionis."—Scripta.

"Palatinus quæcunque tenebat Apollo :—in quibus erant præcipua quæ celestium mentem et superiorum oracula videbantur hominibus revelare." Polycr. II. 26.

(2) Brucker's "Historia Critica Philosophiæ" is a work of the greatest learning, and forms a vast storehouse of information, from which nearly all the more recent histories of philosophy have been borrowed, not to say plundered. Brucker is, in general, as candid and moderate in his views as he is learned. The work was published at Leipzig, in six vols. 4to. 1642-67.

Hume (History of England, vol. 1) thus speaks of Gregory. "He had "waged war with all the precious monuments of the ancients, and even with their "writings, which, as appears from the strain of his own wit, as well as from the "style of his compositions, he had not taste or genius sufficient to comprehend, &c. Judging Hume "from the strain of his own wit," it would seem doubtful whether he derived much benefit from the classics or whether he had "taste or genius sufficient to comprehend them." Take the following passages from his autobiography: "It is difficult for a man to speak long of himself without vanity, therefore I shall be short." Admire the exquisite beauty of the last words. He continues, "In 1734, I went to Bristol, with some recommendations to eminent merchants, but, in a few months found that scene totally unsuitable to me." Que? What scene? The Avon, the Severn, the heights of Clifton, or the ledgers in the offices of the "eminent merchants?" Yet Hume justly ranks as one of England's greatest historians.

M. Giesebrecht's book is entitled "De litterarum studiis apud Italos, primis mediævi seculis," a work of great research.

"Livy was the peculiar mark of his absurd and mischievous fanaticism. The writings of Gregory himself reveal his implacable aversion to the monuments of classic genius, and he points his severest censure against the profane learning of a bishop who taught the art of grammar, studied the Latin poets, and pronounced, with the same voice, the praises of Jupiter and those of Christ. *But the evidence of his destructive rage is doubtful and recent*; the Temple of Peace and the theatre of Marcellus have been demolished by the slow operation of ages, and a formal proscription would have multiplied the copies of Virgil and Livy in the countries which were not subject to the ecclesiastical dictator." (1) I shall now state briefly the charges against Gregory, and having stated, shall reply to them.

They are four in number, viz. :

First, that of expelling the mathematicians from Rome.

Second, that of burning the Palatine library.

Third, that of having depreciated and discountenanced the study of polite learning, as contained in the classics.

Fourth, that of having destroyed the most splendid monuments of ancient Rome.

(1) Decline and Fall, Ch. 45.

I shall presently examine how far Gibbon is justified in the sweeping inference which he draws from the writings of the Pontiff. In naming Virgil, as one of the writers whose works were destroyed, Gibbon commits one of those little blunders which are to be found occasionally in his pages. Virgil during the whole middle ages, and even before they began, ranked almost as high as a Father of the Church. The Emperor Constantine attributed his conversion, in a great degree, to the influence which the perusal of Virgil's fourth Eclogue had exercised over his mind. See his *Oratio ad Sanctos*, C. 19-20. Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* Lowth, *De Poesi Heb. Prælect.* XXI. "If this be so," well remarks Gibbon (Ch. 20) "Virgil deserves to be ranked among the most successful missionaries of the Gospel."

No reader of Dante needs to be told of the estimation in which Virgil was held during the Middle Ages. According to an old legend long preserved at Mantua, the Apostle of the Gentiles had gone on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Virgil, and paid to his memory the tribute of a tear, while addressing him a few touching words. Nothing is therefore said of Gregory's having destroyed Virgil. The assertion (unfounded, as I hope to shew) is that his rage was directed, in particular against *Cicero* and *Livy*.

These are grave charges to bring against one who was both a Benedictine monk and a Roman pontiff. But they are groundless as they are grave.

First, as to the mathematicians ; I observe that the word "mathematicus," is equivocal. It means either of two things, according to the context, "a mathematician," or "an astrologer." The proofs of this are ample and decisive. Astrologers, under the name of "mathematici," are banished from Rome, under Tiberius ; are, for three centuries, objects of the penal code, and are finally proscribed by Diocletian and Maximian. (1)

John of Salisbury (who was one of the most learned men of his day) was perfectly aware of this distinction, and in fact uses the term "mathesis" as synonymous with astrology, as any one may see who will take the trouble of reading the context in the chapter referred to of his *Polycraticus*. (2)

The inference would be that Gregory banished the *astrologers* from Rome ; and, if this be the fact, it only affords another proof of the pontiff's good sense. So much for count the first in this famous indictment. I might go a step further and shew that even had he banished the mathema-

(1) Sueton, in Tiberio : Codex Justin : De maleficiis *ac mathematicis*, VI. 4, 5, 9, and IX, 18. From these laws flowed the mediæval legislation against witchcraft, see Blackstone, Com. vol. IV. Esprit des Loix, XII. 5-6. Yet astrology, though thus proscribed, though consigned by Dante to the lowest circle of Hell, fought hard, entrenched itself behind the professorial chairs of universities, and seduced the great intellects of Albertus Magnus, and Lord Bacon. For further details, see Ammianus Marcellinus, L. xiv, C. 6, and xxviii. 4 ; the *Philosophumena* of Origen ; St. Augustin's Confessions, and De. Civ. Dei., viii. 19. Virgil, Bucol, Tacitus, An. II. 69.

(2) Two excellent editions of John of Salisbury's works have been lately published, one by Dr. Giles of Oxford, who dedicates it to M. Victor Cousin ; the other by the Abbé Migne, in his great ecclesiastical encyclopedia. The *Polycraticus* is perhaps the most remarkable of his writings, and it is worthy of note that this book which seems to reflect so severely on Gregory the Great, contains one of the ablest defences of the Papacy, in its political aspect, ever written. In fact, John was an Ultramontane of the purest water. The book is dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury, the author's friend and patron. He does not tell us why he adopted the strange title of *Polycraticus*, nor is there, as remarked by Dr. Giles, anything in the etymology of the word to explain its employment.

ticians, he would have done nothing to merit the obloquy which has been cast upon his name. Two of the greatest thinkers of modern times held mathematics, as an intellectual discipline, very cheap, yet no one has denounced Lord Bacon, or Sir William Hamilton, as a barbarian. The "Novum Organon," and the "Essays and Discussions," will continue to be read, notwithstanding these apparently heterodox opinions. Perhaps I ought to add a third name, that of Mr. Stuart Mill, who, in his *Logic*, labours hard to pull down mathematics, from its high transcendental position, to the humble level of a purely inductive science.

But I content myself with what I have said and pass to count the second.

Did Gregory destroy the Palatine library? Before answering this question, it would be well (more Hiberno) to ask another.

Did the Palatine library then exist? This famous library had been founded by Augustus, on the Palatine Hill, some six centuries before. How many revolutions had swept over Rome, in that interval? How often had her majesty been outraged by the wild excesses of the Goths, Vandals and Huns? (1) Even supposing it to have survived so many calamities, by what right could Gregory doom it to destruction? He was not ruler of Rome, and by such an act of Vandalism, would have justly exposed himself to the resentment of the Emperor and the reprobation of the whole civilized world. Gregory's whole life was one long struggle

(1) See St. Jerome's account of the capture of Rome, by Alaric (A.D. 410) on that memorable night when, at the "witching hour," the wild blast of the Gothic trumpet proclaimed that the Eternal City, the mistress of the world, was the prey of the Scythian invader: "Nocte Moab capta est, nocte cecidit murus ejus." The Saint, notwithstanding his famous flagellation by the Angel, quotes Virgil, *Æneid* II. 360.

Quis cladem illius noctis? &c. Ep. ad Principiam. See also his commentary on *Ezechiel*, where he says that the fall of Rome involved the whole world in ruin. (When Rome falls—the world.—Byron.) Also St. Augustin, *Horrenda nobis nuntiata sunt, strages, incendia, &c. De Urbis Excid.*

against barbarism, and he lived at a period when the alliance between the intellect of Paganism and the faith of Christendom had been consecrated by the approval of the greatest minds that had adorned the Church. In the East, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil, Eusebius, Gregory of Nazianzum; in the West, Jerome and Augustin had, as it were with one accord, flung open the portals of the Church, in order to welcome within her pale, the illustrious thinkers of the gentile world. The alliance was therefore an accomplished fact, and, thenceforward, Apollo and the Muses, "Pan and old Silvanus, and the sister Nymphs," were bound, as with wreaths of roses, to the triumphal chariot of Christianity. "Science and literature, although strangers to the dawn of Christianity, had now acquired a right of asylum in its bosom. The motives which had so long banished them no longer existed. In presence of a fallen nature and a corrupt world which had abused all the gifts of God, Jesus Christ necessarily appeared alone, weak, naked, in order to display the contrast between human weakness and divine strength.

"The 'Word' of God had descended upon His kingdom and His own received Him not. Neither philosophy, emanation of the Divine reason; nor poetry—pale reflection of celestial concerts, had recognized in Bethlehem's lowly child their Master and their King. Long did they refuse to listen to Him; and the Almighty, as if to punish their rebellion, had taken and bound them captives in the net of the ignorant fishermen of Genesareth.

"But this revolt of the creature was destined to come to an end, in its turn. The day had arrived when man's genius, purified and subdued, offered, to Eternal Truth, the homage of all its conquests. From that time, all knowledge, whatever its name, its date, or its country, belonged

“to Christ, by right of conquest; to God, by right of creation. No one now could rob Him of it, nor could the Church renounce the glorious inheritance.” (1)

In the absence therefore of any evidence which could, for a moment justify such a conclusion, we may unhesitatingly reject, as utterly groundless, the charge against Gregory of having destroyed the Palatine library.

Next comes the accusation of having denounced the study of the classic poets and placed them, as it were, under the ban of the church. This charge rests chiefly on a well known passage in a letter addressed by the Pontiff to St. Didier, Bishop of Vienne. It appears that the holy bishop was (like many other ecclesiastics) both pastor and pedagogue, and explained to his flock the precepts of Christ and the rules of Donatus. This Gregory condemns. The praises of Jupiter must not be sung by lips consecrated to Christ, &c. (2) At first sight, it is not easy to perceive what connection these names have with the mysteries of the Latin Grammar, as M. Guizot observes, and it must be confessed that, on this occasion, the saint expresses himself with more energy than was necessary.

But it should be borne in mind that Gregory lived at a time when society had to contend with the double danger caused by barbarism, on the one hand, and paganism, on the other. At such a crisis, the Pontiff thought that a Christian bishop might employ himself more profitably than in reviving the scandalous fables of the pagan mythology.

“If we examine the records of the sixth and seventh centuries,” says M. Thierry, “we find ample proof of the

(1) De Broglie, “L'Eglise et L'Empire au IVme. Siècle.

(2) In uno se ore, cum jovis laudibus, Christi laudes non capiunt; et quam grave nefandumque sit episcopis canere quod nec laico religioso conveniat, ipse considera; Ep. L. ii. 54. Even Tiraboschi, who has so triumphantly vindicated Gregory's fame, regrets that such sweeping language should have been employed. Mark the words, “quod nec laico.”

“fact that paganism, though dying, was by no means dead,” and the illustrious historian then recites several striking instances. (1) Was it prudent, in the midst of a society still profoundly pagan, to perpetuate through the medium of the Classics, the literary traditions on which paganism chiefly rested?

St. Gregory says boldly—No. This and no more is the “head and front of his offending.”

Fourthly, as regards his having destroyed the statues and monuments of ancient Rome, Tiraboschi shews that such of them as had escaped the fury of the Goths were still standing, long after Gregory had ceased to exist.

In a word, John of Salisbury committed the fatal mistake of being born six centuries too late. What should we think of an historian of the present day, who writing, let us say, amid the quiet of a Roman cloister, should gravely tell us on his own authority that King John had pulled down the Tower of London, and reduced Westminster Abbey to a heap of ruins?

Gregory's eminence both in church and state, his long residence in the East, (then the great seat of intellectual activity,) and, above all, his works (*taken in their integrity*), which clearly shew him to have been, like St. Paul, (2) equally proficient both in sacred and profane literature, all forbid the supposition that he could have waged war on the monuments of classic genius.

Wars of that kind have been reserved for the nineteenth

(1) *Lettres sur l'histoire de France.*

In 539, the Franks, under King Theodebert, made a descent upon Italy, to attack the Goths, and there committed the most fearful excesses. They were Christians, but their conversion seemed very doubtful. After describing many of their atrocities, Procopius (*De Bello Goth.*, L. ii. C. 25) adds *Nam ita Christiani sunt isti barbari, ut multos priscae superstitionis ritus observant, humanas hostias aliaque impia sacrificia divinationibus adhibentes.*

(2) St. Paul quotes passages from Aratus, Epimenides and Menander. The quotation in Acts xvii, 28, is from the first of these poets. See St. Jerome's observation's, *Ep. ad Magnum* (83); *cont. Ruf.* L. i. 30. Plato was less

century, and for the high-priests of modern civilization. (1) The Pontiff's style is certainly deficient in grace and flexibility, and betrays all the defects of an age of literary decline. It is marked by an air of rhetorical amplification, which was originally impressed by Cicero, on Latin literature, was caught up by Tertullian, and, by him, communicated to all the Fathers of the Latin Church, Cyprian, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustin, &c. In a word it is what Mr. Carlyle calls the "buckram style." But these defects are amply compensated by that tone of eloquence, dignity, and decision, which pervades the Pontiff's writings. (2) When, however, the saint accuses himself of certain barbarisms, we can only attribute it to the excessive humility of one whose favourite title was "Servus Servorum."

"Need I remind you," says one of the most eminent of modern critics, "that those preachers of the Gospel will, "in the ardour of their faith, give themselves but small con-

liberal than Paul, for he banished the poets from his model republic. De Rep. L. iii. At the same time he shews himself to be quite au courant of the productions of the Grecian Muse, for he quotes no less than thirty passages from Homer, Hesiod, Æschylus. Compare the following facts: the Roman Senate expelled the Rhetoricians from Rome. The French Republic, in 1793, replying to Lavoisier's appeal for life, stated that the government had no need of chemists!!! The early government of Connecticut tolerated no public amusements, no theatres, &c. The Puritans of England did the same; yet they produced Milton.

(1) See several speeches of Mr. Lowe; *McMillan's Magazine*; the *Fortnightly Review*, &c., &c.

(2) On the subject above referred to, see Ozanam (*Civilisation au Vme. Siècle*), who says, "Ses écrits ont tous les défauts de la décadence latine," Mæhler's *Patrology*. Tiraboschi, *Storia della letteratura Italiana*, t. iii. The Saint admits his offences against grammar; see the Preface to his Commentary "on Job; also Ep. ad Leand; Barbarismi confusionem non devito, situs motus-que et præpositionum casus servare contemno; quia vehementer indignum existimo "ut verba cælestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati." Ælius Donatus, against whose authority the saint so stoutly rebels, was the preceptor of St. Jerome, and the great literary dictator of the Middle Ages. He flourished about the middle of the fourth century, and has left us a grammar, a Commentary on Terence (both highly esteemed), and other works. His Latin grammar forms the basis of all treatises since written on the same subject; so that all generations, from the fourth to the nineteenth century have been his pupils. See some interesting remarks on Donatus, in Warton's *History of English Poetry*.



“cern about the niceties of grammar? Pagan rhetoricians reproached Christianity, on this account, but really grammar was a very small affair, in the world, when compared with this prodigious and beneficent revolution. Arnobius replied to these literary purists, with a supreme contempt for their scruples, and boldly avows that Christianity which changes all things must also change grammar.” (1)

The authenticity of Pope Gregory's *Dialogues*, to which we are indebted for nearly all we know of St. Benedict, has been questioned. I have already explained that there is really no ground for doubting that they are the genuine productions of the Pontiff's pen. Let us hear Fleury on this subject. “I know,” says the distinguished historian, “that this work of St. Gregory's is the one which modern critics have considered most worthy of censure, and some even of contempt. But what I have already related and what I shall yet relate of the acts and opinions of this holy pope forbid all suspicion either of weakness of judgment or of pious fraud. Everywhere, in his writings, do we see ample proof of his humility, candour, good faith, united to great strength of mind and consummate prudence. It is quite true that he had turned his attention more to moral reflections and the practical side of things than to the study of speculative science and of secular learning. We need not therefore be surprised if he has followed the taste of the age in collecting and relating accounts of miraculous events. Besides Gregory had not to refute philosophers who attack religion with weapons supplied by reason. The only remaining pagans of his time were slaves and peasants, or barbarian soldiers who were more readily moved by marvellous recitals than by the most convincing syllogisms. All that St. Gregory appears to

(1) M. Villemain; *Tableau de la littérature au Moyen Âge*. For an interesting account of the manner in which the Latin language was converted, so to speak, from Paganism to Christianity, see Ozanam, *Civilisation au Vme. Siècle*.

“have thought necessary is to relate only the miracles which he considered the best attested, after having adopted all possible precautions to prevent mistakes. For in general his faith and piety did not allow him to doubt the Divine omnipotence.” (1)

“History to be true,” says a Protestant writer of note, “must condescend to speak the language of legend, the belief of the times is part of the record of the times. Men were prepared for wonders, and he who is prepared for wonders will usually see them. . . . Gregory, not from his station alone, *but by the acknowledgment of the admiring world*, was intellectually as well as spiritually the great model of his age. He was proficient in *all the arts and sciences cultivated at that time*. The vast volumes of his writings shew his indefatigable powers, their popularity and authority, his ability to clothe those thoughts and those reasonings in language which would awaken and command the general mind.” (2)

Bayle, who was assuredly no friend to the Papacy, rejects John of Salisbury’s accusation as utterly groundless and fully recognizes Gregory’s merits and his undoubted claim to the epithet of “Great.” (3)

Perhaps I cannot better conclude this hasty sketch of the great Pontiff’s life than by the following passage from his biography by John, the Deacon,—“Wisdom then seemed to have erected for herself a temple, at Rome, and sustained the pre-

(1) Hist. Eccles, L. xxxv. 35.

(2) Milman, Latin Christianity, vol. III.

(3) “Tout bien compté, il mérite le surnom de grand.” Bayle, Diction. Crit. Artic Grégoire le Grand. Berington (Lit. History of the Middle Ages) expresses himself in the same sense, while both admit the authenticity of the Dialogues. See the matter exhaustively treated by Dom. Ceillier, who quotes various works of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries in support of this opinion. Hist. des aut. eccles, t. xvii.

On miracles, as seen from the Protestant point of view, see Arnold’s Lectures on Modern History. Edmund Burke believed in miracles—v. his Fragment on History.

“stige of the Apostolic See, by the aid of the seven liberal arts, as by so many pillars of the most precious stones. Among all who belonged to the Pontiff’s court, from the least to the greatest, not only was there an entire absence of any trace of barbarism, either in speech or dress, but an elegance and refinement reigned which recalled some of the best days of ancient Rome.

“The arts were there cultivated with zeal, and Latium seemed to behold in Gregory another Augustus.” (1)

Gregory’s character is admirably summed up in his epitaph :—

Suscipe, terra, tuo corpus de corpore sumtum,  
 Reddere quod valeas, vivificante Deo,  
 Spiritus alta petit, leti nil jura nocebunt,  
 Cui, vitæ alterius, mors magis illa via est,  
 Pontificis summi hoc clauduntur membra sepulcro,  
 Qui innumeris semper vivit ubique bonis.  
 Esuriem dapibus superavit, frigora veste.  
 Atque animas monitis textit ab hoste suis,  
 Implebat-que actu quidquid sermone docebat,  
 Esset ut exemplum mystica verba loquens  
 Anglos ad Christum vertit, pietate ministrâ,  
 Acquirens fideique agmina, gente novâ.  
 Hic labor, hoc studium, hæc tibi cura, hoc, pastor, agebas,  
 Ut Domino offeres plurima lucra, greges;  
 Hisque, Dei Consul factus, lætare triumphis!  
 Nam mercedem operum jam sine fine tenes.

The line “Implebat-que actu, &c.” might have suggested the well known lines of the Father of English poetry :

“The lore of Christ and his Apostles twelve  
 He taught, *but first he practised it himself.*”

The second last line of the epitaph has the genuine ring of the old Roman metal,

“Hisque, *Dei Consul factus, lætare triumphis.*”

I have assumed, throughout, as proved, the fact that Gregory was a Benedictine; but I am, of course, aware that

(1) Tunc rerum sapientia Romæ sibi templum visibiliter quodammodo fabricarat et septemplex artibus, veluti columnis nobilissimorum totidem lapidum, Apostolicæ sedis atrium fulciebat. Nullus pontifici famulantium, a minimo usque ad maximum, barbarum quodlibet, in sermone vel habitu, præ se ferebat, sed togata, quiritem more, sen trabiata latinitas, &c., &c. Joan. Diac. in vit. S.

this has been denied, on very high authority. On the negative side are Baronius, (ad an 581), Sir Jno. Marsham (Præf ad Monast. Anglic), Tanner, (Pref. to Notitia Monastica), Father Papebroche, (Acta S. S. t. 2), Thomassin, (Vetus ac nova discip. III. 24), the learned Dr. Hickes, Dr. Lingard, in his "Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church," &c.

Gibbon delivers himself in the following oracular manner, "The Benedictines labour to reduce the monasteries of Gre-  
"gory within the rule of their own order, but as the ques-  
"tion is confessed to be *doubtful*, it is *clear* that these power-  
"ful monks are in the wrong." (1) Extraordinary logic from  
so extraordinary a man!

Suppose that in 1510, some one had said—"Copernicus  
"labours to prove the Sun to be the centre of our planetary  
"system, but, as the question is confessed to be doubtful, it  
"is clear that this powerful priest is in the wrong."—Remark-  
ably clear to all who will not see.

On the affirmative side are Reyner who treats the subject  
at length in his "Benedictinorum in Angliâ Apostolatus:"  
Mabillon, (Acta. S. S. Ord. S. Bened. t. 1., Annal. Ord. S.  
Bened. L. vi. and Analecta, t. 2). All the Benedictine  
historians; Natalis Alexander, (Eccles. Hist.) Bingham,  
(Antiquities of the Christian Church, vol. 2, p. 346). Sei-  
den, (in Not. ad Ead). Milman, (Latin Christianity), Mon-

Greg. Mag. L. ii. C. 12, and 13. The "seven liberal arts" here referred to  
constituted the famous trivium and quadrivium of the Middle Ages: the former  
comprising grammar, logic, and rhetoric; the latter, arithmetic, geometry,  
astronomy, and music, which implied not only a knowledge of all the rest, but  
an acquaintance with the sacred text, &c.

Chateaubriand (Génie du Christianisme, III<sup>me</sup>. partie, L. i. C. 2) pays an  
eloquent tribute to the Gregorian music; while similar testimony is borne by  
the greatest of modern poets. Who that has assisted at the performance of  
Faust, can forget the thrilling effect which Goethe produces by the aid of the  
solemn strains of the Gregorian *Miserere*?

Sternest clime,  
And rudest age, are subject to the thrill  
Of Heaven-descending piety and song.

(1) Decline and Fall, C. 45.

Montalembert (Moines d'Occident), Helyot (Hist. des Ordres Monast.,) &c.

The balance of evidence is now admitted to be entirely on the affirmative side. The silence of Bede, on the subject, (as observed by the author of his life in the *Biographia Britannica*) is certainly remarkable; but, if we are to reject good testimony because other good testimony is wanting, we should find ourselves committed to very dangerous conclusions. On the whole I prefer Mabillon to Gibbon, on such a subject.

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### JOHN MABILLON.

JOHN MABILLON, "the most illustrious of modern monks," (1) was born, of humble parents, at St. Pierre-Mont, in Champagne, on the 23rd of November, 1632. His early years were tranquilly spent under the paternal roof, where the seeds of piety, afterwards destined to bear such abundant fruit, were carefully planted by his mother's hands. To an uncle, the Curé of a neighbouring parish, he was indebted for the rudiments of knowledge. Sent at an early age to the college of Rheims, he there quickly distinguished himself among his youthful fellow students. The gravity of his manners and the superiority of his intelligence soon marked him out as one capable of rendering valuable services to the Church. The portals of the sanctuary are opened to him, and in 1651 he receives the clerical tonsure at the hands of the Archbishop of Embrun. Two years later he takes another step which gave a complexion to his whole future. This was his admis-

(1) Montalembert, Moines d'Occident.

sion as postulant into the order of St. Benedict. He now devoted himself with great energy to these exercises of piety and study which have immortalized his name. His health, always delicate, soon sank under these self-imposed labours, both mental and physical, and he was therefore compelled to seek relaxation and change of air. For this purpose and in obedience to the commands of his superiors, who were naturally solicitous to preserve so valuable a life, he reluctantly bade adieu to the venerable cloisters of St. Remi, and visited successively various houses of the Benedictine order. It is scarcely necessary to say that everywhere he was received with that hospitality which was one of the glories of the community, and to which his rising reputation and delicate health seemed to give him an additional claim. His first visit was to the Abbey of Nogent then (thanks to its commendatory Abbot, the Cardinal de Châtillon) little better than a heap of ruins. A strange place, one would have thought, for an invalid, and yet the selection of this charming valley with its deep, mysterious shades, its flower-enamelled meadows, and its wild birds mingling their gay carols with the gentle murmurs of the Aigrette, proved one of the happiest. Mabillon, like all men of a highly organized temperament was a lover of nature, and here drank large draughts of health at one of nature's favorite springs. After some time spent amid these gentle scenes his health was sufficiently restored to enable him to undertake the responsibilities of Holy Orders. In September, 1657, he was therefore ordained a Sub-deacon, and in June, 1658, a Deacon.

It being now considered that he might safely resume his life of study, he was ordered to remove to the celebrated Abbey of Corbey, in the diocese of Amiens, which fills so honourable a place in the literary history of mediæval France. (1)

(1) For an interesting account of Corbey, see D'Achery, *Spicilegium*, t. IV.

The splendid library of this abbey afforded Mabillon an opportunity of cultivating his literary taste, and of this he was not slow to avail himself.

In March, 1660, he was ordained Priest. In 1663 we find him an inmate of the royal Abbey of St. Denis, near Paris, and a year later we see him transferred to that of St. Germain des Prés, his future home and the scene of his great literary triumphs.

This ancient and illustrious pile demands something more than a mere passing notice. "This church," says an eminent historian, "was the tomb of the Merovingian Princes. Its original porch still remains, and within its walls, so often rebuilt, it yet holds the dust of the sons of the Conqueror of Gaul. If these pages be worth anything they will tend to increase our age's respect for the old royal Abbey, now reduced to the rank of a mere parochial church, and perhaps they will give a fresh impetus to these reverential feelings inspired by this place of prayer, hallowed, as it is, by a consecration of 1,300 years." (1)

Its history is the more instructive, because it forms, as it were, the counterpart to those of most of the mediæval monasteries. Like theirs its origin was miraculous. Childebert, King of the Franks (A.D. 550), cured of a dreadful malady by the prayers of St. Germain, Bishop of Paris, resolves to erect a splendid monument which shall be, at once, a proof of his gratitude to God and his charity to man.

The famous Abbey, built on a gentle eminence from which it could behold the windings of the Seine and hear the faint echoes awakened by the many-tongued Lutetia, was the result of this happy inspiration. Founded by Childebert it is destined to bear the name of St. Germain and to welcome within its walls the remains of the holy bishop whose dust there mingles with that of the Merovingian Kings. The grandeur

(1) Augustin Thierry.

of its proportions, its splendid cross of purest gold, in which the cunning fingers of the workmen of Toledo had set the most precious of stones, its sacred vases sparkling with gems, its pillars of polished marble, its roof adorned with golden tracery, its floor of curious mosaic, all these and much beside are celebrated in the poetry of Fortunatus and the prose of Mabillon.

Its future fame proved worthy of its illustrious origin, and each succeeding age witnessed some accession to its grandeur and influence. In the ninth century, the Abbey of St. Germain was at the head of one of the greatest territorial possessions in France. The various grants which the piety of successive kings and chieftains had thus bequeathed to them were cultivated, by the monks, with the most untiring industry, and we still possess, on this subject, in the "Polyptic" of the Abbot Irminon, a record of the most valuable kind (1) But the Abbey sometimes had to pay dearly for its prestige. The Normans pillaged it, and were on the point of renewing their devastations, when they found, to their cost, that the monks could fight as well as pray. The siege of St. Germain like that of Troy, has had its bard, and Abbo, the monastic Homer of the age, has recorded, in stirring accents, the gallantry of the monks and the successful strategy of their martial Abbot, Ebolus. Calm, self-possessed, full of resources, and capable of communicating to others the energy which he felt himself. Ebolus was, at once, the model of a monk and soldier. Yet the candour of the poet admits that his character exhibited certain defects which told rather of the "tented field," than the calm of the cloister. (2)

(1) The Polyptic dates from 811, and is a registry of the temporal affairs of the Abbey, compiled with great care and minuteness. Its historical value is of the highest order. It has been recently published by M. Guérard, of the Institute.

(2) His micuit præstans Ebolus, Mavortius Abbas.

Ni cupidus nimium, lascivus, et omnibus aptus. Abbo. L. ii. v. 436.



Victory crowned the arms of the monks, who were animated by the appearance, in their midst, of St. Germain himself, waving a flaming brand and hurling defiance at the foe.

The Normans, however, were not the only enemies that the monks had to contend with. After beating the barbarians from abroad, they had to struggle with the still greater barbarians to be found at home. These, strange to say, were the students of the University of Paris. Familiar, as many of us are with the accounts of modern "town and gown" rows, we can form no idea of the violence and brutality which marked the conduct of these learned mediæval mobs. Proud of the great privileges which they enjoyed, proud also of the superior attainments which they disgraced, these lettered barbarians went in bands through the city, armed with staves and bludgeons, wounding men, insulting women, and carrying everywhere confusion and dismay. Adjoining the abbey, and depending on it, was a large open space, then and now known as the "Pré aux Clercs." This place, which on gala days, was much frequented by the Parisian bourgeois, with their wives and children, was selected, in a special manner, as the scene of their exploits, by the university heroes. The most dreadful outrages were committed, blood flowed, and on one occasion, viz. in 1192, a student was killed. The blood of the university was now fairly roused, and the most terrible reprisals were threatened against the bourgeois. To check these disgraceful scenes, the Abbot of St. Germain, as lord of the manor, was compelled to intervene, but only to realize the old adage ;—

" They who in quarrels interpose  
Will often wipe a bloody nose."

The students turned their fury on the monks, and sad to say, completely defeated them. (1)

(1) On this subject see Du Boulay, Hist. Univ. t. III. Fleury, 5th Dis-

From this period the authority of the abbey, as a great feudal institution sensibly declined. Martial monks, like Ebolus, gave place to those of milder temperament, like Simon, who, in 1239, invited to St. Germain the famous architect, Eudes de Montreuil, already immortalized by that gem of Christian art, that epic in stone, the Sainte Chapelle of St. Louis. Eudes executed two chefs d'œuvre at St. Germain, viz. a refectory, and a chapel of the Virgin, both worthy of his great reputation.

A volume might easily be filled with an account of the art treasures of this venerable abbey, but for these and other interesting details, I must refer the reader to the pages of the historian who has made this the subject of a special study. (1)

Passing over then many "moving incidents" in its eventful history, I hasten to the time when its portals were flung open to admit the man whose genius was destined to add fresh gems to its ancient crown.

Mabillon entered the Abbey, in July, 1664. It was then in the zenith of its fame for learning and piety, both of which were worthily represented by the distinguished savant, D'Achery. Between these two eminent men there then sprang up a feeling of mutual respect and friendship, which death alone terminated. From this period, the literary life of Mabillon begins, and henceforward he belongs to the Republic of Letters.

The first work by which he is known is an edition of the works of St. Bernard, which appeared in 1667, in two folio

course on Ecclesiastical History; Michelet, *Hist. de France*, v. ii. M. Michelet quotes a passage from Jacques de Vitri, over which, happily for ears polite, the veil of a learned language is thrown.

How fully these students (so unlike those in whose society the writer of these lines once had the happiness of living) illustrated the Horatian maxim, *Ingenuas fideliter*, &c.

(1) Bouillart, *Hist. de St. Germain des Prés*.

volumes, and in which he displayed his great learning and critical acumen.

His next work was his great history of the Benedictine Saints, the "*Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*."

The compilation of such a work as this had been projected from the very commencement of the congregation of St. Maur, and, with this view, materials were carefully collected in the various houses of the order throughout France. When Mabillon became an inmate of the Abbey of St. Germain des Prés, considerable progress had been made in these researches, and it seemed to the authorities that the time had come for erecting, on a solid basis, the literary monument of the order. This duty was accordingly confided to Mabillon, who accepted it, as a labour of love.

He confines himself, however, to writing the lives of the Benedictine saints, instead of a general history of the order which he will also produce, in its own time.

In this work, he received the most valuable assistance from D'Achery, but the prefaces, notes, observations, and tables, with which it is enriched, are all exclusively by Mabillon. Such was his ardour in the cause, that he not only devoted to it many hours of the day, he still worked at it by the midnight lamp, and robbed himself of the repose which his delicate health still required.

The great collection of the Bollandists, the *Acta Sanctorum* initiated by F. Rosweyde, and continued by the Jesuits, had doubtless supplied him with the model of his History, and it is certain that he availed himself largely of the labours of those learned hagiographers. At the same time, there is in it much that is entirely his own, a more discriminating judgment, a wider and more thoroughly Catholic spirit, and a firmer grasp of the whole subject of Christian archæology. The proof of this is to be found in the valu-

able prefaces prefixed to the various volumes of the work and which still remain as so many mines of wealth in all that relates to ecclesiastical biography. This work, now very rare, runs through nine folio volumes, the first of which appeared in 1668 and the last in 1701.

The publication of the *Acta* involved Mabillon in a little controversy with some of the more timid and conservative spirits of the order who were alarmed at the boldness of some of his views and the apparent irreverence with which he cast down some stars of less magnitude, from the heights of the Benedictine firmament. The great learning of Mabillon and the simple logic of facts afforded him an easy triumph over these timid thinkers. Truth and piety, he says, should always go hand in hand ; and therefore, wherever he meets with what is untrue, no matter how venerable or how edifying it may seem, he brands it as a fiction. For the truth of God needs not man's lying lips (Job xiii. 7). Mabillon had the satisfaction of soon seeing the Chief of the Church, set on his work, the seal of his supreme approbation.

The Abbey of St. Germain was, at this time, the rendezvous of all that was most eminent in the Republic of Letters. Here, on certain days, might be found Ducange, in the pages of whose famous "Glossary" the language, manners and customs of the Middle Ages live again to all time. Hither also came Baluze, the learned editor of the Capitularies of Charlemagne and of the works of several Fathers of the Church ; D'Herbelot, the celebrated Orientalist, so frequently quoted by Gibbon ; Adrien de Valois, better known perhaps to readers of ecclesiastical lore, under his latinized name of Valesius ; Cotelier, the learned annotator on the works of the Apostolic Fathers ; Fleury, the distinguished ecclesiastical historian, and many others. All these celebrated men found themselves perfectly at home, within the walls of the venerable abbey, and in the society of savants like Mabillon and D'Achery.

Mabillon carried on, at the same time, a vast correspondence with men of genius in various parts of Europe, with Bossuet, who willingly availed himself of the learning of the Benedictine, on many difficult points; with Fénelon, who entertained for him the highest esteem, with the Bollandists of Belgium, &c.

Such were the industry and versatility of powers displayed by this eminent man.

Cardinal Baronius strongly protests against the overweening vanity of the Benedictines, in claiming for their order many illustrious men who never had the least connection with it. This was a weakness from which Mabillon was remarkably exempt, as shewn in his lives of the Benedictine Saints. It would have been well for him had he always displayed the same moderation and good sense. On one important occasion, however, he allowed his zeal for the glory of the order to outrun his discretion and displayed all the narrow views of a determined partisan. I allude to the part he took in the celebrated controversy as to the authorship of the "Imitation." On this occasion, Mabillon, for the first and only time of his life, espoused a hopelessly untenable cause. Three names had been mentioned by three different parties, each party asserting its favourite name to be that of the author of the most remarkable spiritual book ever written, the sacred Scriptures alone excepted. These were John Gersen, John Gerson and Thomas à Kempis. The first was supposed to be an Italian Benedictine. Bellarmine lent to his claims the sanction of his great name. So did Mabillon. Further enquiry has clearly shewn both these eminent men to have been entirely wrong. Gersen is now completely out of court, he is a myth, *vox et præterea nihil*. The second is a Frenchman, and, though no myth, he certainly is not the author of the "Imitation." There remains Thomas à Kempis, and to him the

best critics of our own day have unhesitatingly assigned the palm. (1)

The next event in the literary life of Mabillon was the publication of the splendid edition of the works of St. Augustin, with original prefaces of the highest value. This edition, the first volumes of which appeared in 1679, was specially opportune. France was then rocking in the throes of the Jansenist controversy, the abettors of which appealed to St. Augustin and boldly claimed him as their own. At such a moment, the Benedictines came forward with the ipsissima verba of the great doctor as if they would say "You have appealed to Cæsar, behold Cæsar gives judgment against you." The appearance of the work was eagerly awaited by theologians and savants. The great reputation of St. Augustin, the vast erudition of the Benedictines and the excitement produced by the Jansenist controversy all tended to invest this new edition with the highest interest. Yet, strange to say, no sooner was the work published than the alarm was sounded by the Jesuits, who asserted that the Benedictines, under the mask of orthodoxy, were really playing into the hands of heresy. We are bound to assume that these reverend Fathers believed, or they never would have made, so grave a charge. The fact, however, merely proves the fallibility of their judgment. The Benedictine edition of the works of St. Augustin had the good fortune of being solemnly approved, in 1700, by the Sovereign Pontiff and still remains the best ever published of the writings of the illustrious Bishop of Hippo.

Notwithstanding the aberrations of individual members who were reasonably suspected of complicity in Jansenism, the congregation of St. Maur, as a body, justly enjoyed at the period referred to, the reputation of the strictest orthodoxy.

(1) See, on this subject, the exhaustive work of Mgr. Malou, late Bishop of Bruges, "*Recherches sur le véritable auteur de l'imitation*," also Professor Ullman's "*Reformatoren Vor der Reformation*." But if Thomas à Kempis wrote, St. Augustin may be said to have inspired, this wonderful book. See Poujoulat, *Hist. de St. Augustin*, t. II.

The publication of this celebrated edition was therefore an act of faith and an earnest protest against Jansenism. It was even more than this. One of the evils of the Reformation, for which Goethe could never forgive Luther, was its flinging the great problems of the spiritual order, like so many nuts to be cracked by the jaws of the vulgar. Jansenism did the same and the mighty names of Grace, Predestination, Free-will, &c. might be heard profanely bandied from mouth to mouth. When St. Augustin appeared on the scene, all this was changed, for the saint's doctrine is so sublime, so majestically does he soar to the very summit of Christian philosophy, that none but the most disciplined and most vigorous minds could follow him. St. Augustin has ever been regarded by the Church as the ablest exponent of her mysteries and the most eloquent defender of her dogmas. No longer, according to Pope Martin (1) need she envy the wisdom of philosophers or the eloquence of orators; she needs no longer the penetrating glance of Aristotle, the persuasive powers of Plato, the gravity of Socrates, the prudence of Varro, the flowing periods of Cicero. All these she finds in Augustin, illumined by a ray from on high, which was wanting to the sages of Greece and Rome. Next in importance to the great African bishop, comes St. Thomas, who is himself only St. Augustin in the dress of the schools. I am not going to enter here into the great theologico-literary controversy raised by the publication of the works of the Saint; nor shall I stop to enquire how far Luther, Calvin and Jansenius were justified in sheltering themselves under the shadow of Augustin's wings.

I content myself with observing that so completely has the Church identified herself with the teaching of the bishop of Hippo, that to reject Augustin's authority is (as Bossuet <sup>s</sup>) to reject that of the Church. When, in the sixteenth

(1) Serm in translat. S. Monic.

century, it became necessary to condemn the innovations of the Reformers, on the thorny subjects of Grace, Predestination, &c., the Council of Trent could find no more appropriate language in which to express itself than by quoting the very words of St. Augustin. (1)

It is worthy of note that Mabillon took no part in this great quarrel. Calmly conscious that time and truth were on his side, he allowed the storm to rage, without, for a moment, mingling in a strife so foreign to his studious habits and for which his great literary labours left him no time. (1)

On the completion of the work, Mabillon had the honor of an audience of the "Grand Monarque," Louis XIV., to whom he was introduced by Le Tellier, Archbishop of Reims, a patron of letters and a man of highly cultivated taste. "Sire," said the archbishop, "I have the honor of presenting to your Majesty the most learned man in your dominions," "and the humblest also, your Grace might have added," said Bossuet, who was present. If the laudari a laudato viro be one of the highest incentives to perseverance in a glorious career, assuredly such encouragement was not wanting to Mabillon, on that memorable day; a day of triumph, as one of his biographers observes, for learning and piety. (2)

(1) See Bossuet, *Tradition des Saints Pères*, Petavius, *Dogmata Theol.*, t. III. L.IV, C.V., Bellarmin *De Gratia*, L.II. C.XI. Cardinal Noris observes that St. Augustin's book on Correction and Grace affords the key to his doctrine on this difficult subject and, by anticipation, completely refutes Jansenius. Noris, *Hist. Pelagiana*, C.VIII.

(1) It is strange to see the good faith of Mabillon impeached by a member of his own order, Father Le Cerf (*Bibliothèque des Auteurs de la Congrégation de St. Maur*) accuses him of duplicity in the preface to the 11th vol. of St. Augustin's works. He is defended by Richelet (*Bibliothèque*) and by Moreri, *Dict. Hist. Art. Mabillon*.

"How shall we those requite  
"Who wish us evil, if we thus condemn  
"The man that loves us?"

How many other eminent men, without excepting some even of those who have been invested with the highest of all earthly dignities, have been similarly condemned, but whom time has nobly avenged?

(2) M. Chavin de Malan, *Hist. de Mabillon*, Ch. iv.



The year 1681 beheld another colossal work issue from the prolific pen of Mabillon. This was his *Treatise De re Diplomatica*, in two folio volumes. This, according to Nicéron, is Mabillon's greatest work, affording him, as it does, an opportunity of displaying, on a subject of the highest importance, all the treasures of his vast erudition. (1)

A brief account of this celebrated work may not prove unacceptable to the reader. It is simply a history of Diplomas. This word to most minds probably conveys the idea of some mysterious process by which a man is initiated into the arcana of the healing art. This, however, is only one, certainly not the most important, of its meanings. A Diploma, in its original sense, meant an act of the highest authority, temporal or spiritual, conferring certain rights or privileges, conveying large grants of land, &c., in fact something like what we now call charters or letters patent. The name is Greek, and signifies "folded in two," because these documents were originally written on two tablets joined and folded together.

Mabillon's work is a critical and exhaustive enquiry into the history, and authenticity of ancient monuments, historic records, letters patent, &c., which he traces through the Jewish, Pagan, and Christian periods.

The Bollandists had the merit of preceding him, in this path, in which they displayed all their usual zeal and learning. (2) It was chiefly to Fr. Papebroch, that this portion of their great undertaking was assigned. Mabillon, while fully appreciating the eminent services of this distinguished archæologist, yet dissented from several of his views as to the authenticity of various ancient diplomas. It is credit-

(1) See Nicéron, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des hommes illustres*, t. vii. These *Mémoires* run through 33 vols. and have afforded me valuable assistance in preparing this and other biographies.

(2) *Acta Sanctorum*, Aprilis.

able to the learned Jesuit that, on reading Mabillon's work, he was so struck with the correctness of the opinions, and the cogency of the arguments which it contains, that he immediately acknowledged himself vanquished. With all the candour and humility of real genius, he at once, addressed the following letter to Mabillon: "Rev. Father, the only "satisfaction that I now derive from having written on this "subject is that of having afforded you the opportunity of "producing so valuable a work. At first, it is quite true "that I felt a little mortified to find myself so completely refuted. But this sentiment soon gave place to one of admiration at the beauty and importance of so precious a book. "Full of joy at there finding Truth displayed, in her most "pleasing aspect, I lost no time in inviting my fellow-labourer to come and share my feelings of satisfaction. You "are therefore quite at liberty to say, whenever you deem it "necessary, that I am entirely of your opinion."

This letter does equal honour to him who wrote and him who received it.

The work "*De Re Diplomatica*," came out under the patronage of Colbert, the famous financial minister of Louis XIV., and the Mécenas of French literature. Colbert, who saw in it the key-stone of the arch of Christian archæology, wished to mark his appreciation of the book, by settling a pension on the author. But this Mabillon, with characteristic modesty, declined.

A mere outline of the contents of this work would fill whole pages.

I shall content myself with a few details as to the mode of signing ancient documents, a subject on which a good deal of misconception prevails. Many of those who signed them did so by simply affixing a cross, and from this it has been somewhat gratuitously assumed (for example, by

Robertson and others) that all these "marksmen" were ignorant of the art of writing.

Some doubtless were, though only four instances are given by Mabillon. These are Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths; Withred, King of Kent; Tassilo, Duke of Bavaria; and Heribaud, Comte du Palais, under Louis II. (1) The fact is that signing with a cross was a matter of common occurrence, even among educated people. Many so signed with the intention of imparting greater solemnity to the act, and on such occasions, it was not unusual to dip the pen in the sacred contents of the Eucharistic cup. (2)

Many again signed by proxy; and for this three reasons are assigned by Mabillon: first, ignorance, no doubt a general cause: secondly, blindness, a very satisfactory cause: thirdly, vanity, a sentiment which was flattered, (as it still is among many whose heads are scantily supplied with brains), by the thought that it added to one's importance to have one's name written by a scribe or notary, who was also expected to add a flourish, in the orthodox heraldic style, expressive of the dignity, &c., of the signatory. Upon all these subjects Mabillon throws a blaze of light.

The work, however, was not allowed to pass without some lively comments from the pen of the Jesuit, F. Germon.

No edifice, says Germon, is stronger than its foundation; the foundation of Mabillon's edifice is bad, ergo, &c.

Father Germon, whose writings sparkle with that light sceptical raillery, so characteristic of his countrymen, gives

(1) Signum Heribaldi, comitis sancti palati, qui ibi fui, et propter ignorantiam litterarum, signum sanctæ crucis feci.—*De Re Dip.* L. vi.

(2) See, on this extraordinary custom, the *Glossarium* of Ducange, article "*Crux*." *Interdum, quo solennius ac firmitus esset pactum quod subscribebatur cruces ipsæ exarabantur calamo in pretioso Christi sanguine intincto.* Bishops alone had the privilege of affixing their names and crosses at the same time, a privilege which they still retain. Ample details on this subject are given by Dugdale, *Monast. Anglic.* t. i. and iii. and by Spelman, *Conc.* t. i. on all that relates to English diplomas.

us plenty of phrases but few facts. As a logician, one may say, he fails to prove his minor. Still the controversy attracted considerable attention, and although Mabillon (to whom such wordy warfare was essentially distasteful) took no part in the discussion, he was ably defended by his confreres, Ruinart, Constant, and by the Abbé Fontanini, professor of eloquence in the Roman College. The elegant scepticism of Germon was carried out to its legitimate development by Fr. Hardouin, another distinguished Jesuit, of whom Huet (Bishop of Avranches) has said that, for forty years, he had unsuccessfully laboured to destroy his reputation. Father Hardouin, at one fell swoop, annihilates the classical writers. No such persons, he says, ever existed, at least in the sense usually attached to the word. He excepts, however, Cicero, Pliny (Natural History), Horace (Satires and Epistles), and Virgil (The Georgics). All other writings (styled classical) are purely suppositious, and are the productions of the mediæval monks. *Credat Judæus!* We see here how the extremes of scepticism and faith meet, and that he who believes least really believes most. Classical poetry is merely the expression of an elegant symbolism, beneath whose transparent veil can be discerned the great truths of the Christian dispensation. Thus the *Æneid* was the production of a Benedictine of the 13th century and was simply an allegorical account of the journey of St. Peter to Rome! The Odes of Horace sprang from the same source, and Lalage, the divinity of the poet's idolatry, was only another name for the Christian religion! Thus did Fr. Hardouin, resting his lever on the fulcrum of a lively imagination, lift the intellectual world at his will. These ingenious theories were supremely amusing to Boileau, who used to say, "Though I don't love the monks, I should have no objection to live with brother Horace and Dom Virgil."

Father Hardouin's book was disavowed by the Jesuits, but it deserves a prominent place in the curiosities of literature. Mabillon's work will last as long as the highest order of historical criticism and the profoundest learning are appreciated.

It was shortly after the publication of this work that Mabillon undertook a kind of literary pilgrimage through various parts of France, Germany and Italy, visiting on his way many places which had been hallowed by the traditions of piety or genius: the college of St. Jerome at Cluny, the Abbey of St. Gall, the holy house of Loretto, the tombs of the Apostles, and the graves of Virgil, Dante and Ariosto. The fruit of this journey was the publication of his "*Museum Italicum*," a valuable repository of history, criticism and liturgical lore.

On the last subject he had already produced a volume under the title "*Dissertatio de Pane Eucharistico azymo et 'formentato*." On this matter he was at issue with Cardinal Bona, and it must be admitted that the monk proved too strong for the prince of the Church. The question was simply, what kind of bread, leavened or unleavened, had been sanctioned by the usage of the ancient Church, in the celebration of the sacred mysteries. Cardinal Bona says either kind indifferently; Mabillon says unleavened bread only. He is, as usual, panoplied with proofs, and begins at the beginning, viz., the Last Supper. He shews, by the testimony of the Fathers, that our Saviour used unleavened bread, at the institution of the Eucharist, and that this fact decided the Latin Church to adopt the same kind of bread. At the same time he admits that the practice of the Apostles was not absolutely uniform on this point, while the Greeks, who look upon the use of unleavened bread as a relic of the Judaizing tendencies so common in the first century, employ

leavened bread only. Mabillon had the satisfaction of converting to his own views his eminent adversary. The question belongs entirely to discipline, it was left "open" by the Council of Florence and is not yet closed.

To return, however, to his literary travels, we find that his progress through the various countries and cities that lay in his line of route, resembled rather the march of a monarch than the pilgrimage of a monk. Everywhere eminent and learned bodies pressed forward to do honour to the man who had rendered such splendid services to literature and the church. To crown all these tributes of respect, another and still greater distinction awaited him on his return to his native land. The King, wishing to mark, in a striking manner, his sense of Mabillon's valuable labours, named him an honorary member of the Academy of Inscriptions. Mabillon was very sensible of this gracious act of so great a monarch, and expressed his gratitude in a few appropriate words, addressed to the Secretary of State, Count Pontchartrain. His admission into the ranks of this illustrious assembly was marked by a dissertation on the ancient burial places of the Kings of France, in which he sustained his well earned reputation for eloquence and learning. (1)

In 1683, appeared a book on the duties of the Monastic life from the pen of the celebrated De Rancé, then Abbot of la Trappe. The name of De Rancé has been immortalized by the genius of Chateaubriand. (2) What a world of startling contrasts is evoked by the very mention of that name! A patrician by birth, a literary man by choice, a priest from ambition, an elegant epicurean from taste and inclination,

(1) See De Boze, *Eloge De Mabillon*, Hist. de l'Académie, t. 1. The discourse pronounced on this occasion, by Mabillon, is to be found in his posthumous works: it is also published in the *Mémoires* of the Academy.

(2) *Vie de Rancé*, par Chateaubriand; a work, says M. de Sainte Beuve, (*Portraits Contemporains*) whose beauties defy all attempts at criticism. This book was written at the express desire of Chateaubriand's spiritual director.

De Rancé ends as the reformer of one of the strictest orders of the church. The depth of his fall is equalled only by the height of his repentance. Amid all the wild license of a disordered life, a ray of grace shall fall upon and transform him. Then this gay, handsome, high-born young man, the friend of Richelieu and the protégé of Marie de Medicis, the unworthy priest who had dragged the sacred robe of the sanctuary through the mire of the passions, the refined voluptuary for whom pleasure was the supreme law, suddenly touched by a glow of celestial fire, renounces all the grandeurs and attractions of the world, distributes his goods among the poor, and, during seven-and-thirty long years, bewails, amid the gloom of the cloister, the errors and scandals of his earlier days.

Here, however, we shall not further concern ourselves with his faults or with his virtues which have both been candidly described by his illustrious biographer. Our business is with his book which brought him into collision with Mabillon. The book is entitled "*De la Saintete et des devoirs de la vie monastique*," and is perhaps the most learned defence of ignorance ever written. Chateaubriand gives an elaborate analysis of the contents of the work and quotes largely from its pages, which amply prove that the pen of the editor of *Anacreon* had lost none of its ancient vigour in the hands of the Abbot of la Trappe. Bossuet was charmed with the work on which he set the seal of his episcopal imprimatur. "What then," asks Chateaubriand, "is this book which the Eagle of Meaux has covered with the shadow of his wings? In vain did Rancé allege that he had no longer the strength for such a work. He styled and thought himself old, while life's crimson current still coursed healthily through his veins. What he foresaw, however, took place, and a long quarrel arose, some two or three

“years after the publication of the book. The gravity of these disputes has nothing analogous to the literary quarrels of our own days. This portion of the past forms a curious subject of study. Bossuet’s judgment both as regards the matter and the manner of the book proved to be perfectly correct.”

Here follow copious extracts from the book, which it is unnecessary to reproduce here. Its leading idea, the pivot round which the work revolves is simply this : “A monk has nothing to do with books ; his only learning should be to know God, his only study to please Him. The fruits of the Tree of Knowledge must be left to other hands to pluck. In a word, he must add to his other vows one of ignorance also.” (1) Here, however, is one extract which will perhaps give an idea of the style and spirit of the writer. Contrasting the perils of the world with the peace of the cloister, De Rancé thus speaks, “For you, my brethren, God has levelled all these obstacles and preserved you from all these dangers, by leading you to adopt a life of solitude. For you the world is as if it were not. It has vanished from your, as you from its, thoughts. What passes there has not the smallest place in your minds. Its ‘fluctuations and its vast concerns’ trouble you no more, and you never think of it except when you prostrate yourselves before God, to sigh over its many miseries. The very names, of its rulers would be unknown to you, did you not mingle them with the prayers which you offer to God for the preservation of their persons. In a word, in leaving it, you have, at once and for ever, renounced its pleasures, its affairs, its for-

(1) How admirably has not Montaigne expressed this idea, in his own quaint style. Je prens plaisir de voir, en quelque lieu, des hommes, par dévotion, faire vœu d’ignorance, comme de chasteté, de pauvreté, de pénitence ; c’est aussi chaster nos appétits desordonnez d’emousser cette cupidité qui nous espoine, — comme à l’estude des livres et priver l’âme de cette complaisance voluptueuse qui nous chatouille par l’opinion de science, &c. Essais, L. iii. C. 12.



"tunes, its vanities, and you have trampled under foot those very things which worldlings so dearly prize, and which they treasure up in their heart of hearts."

"Such," continues Chateaubriand, "is the treatise on the sanctity of the monastic life. In reading it, we seem to listen to the majestic and sonorous swell of the organ. We are pacing through a basilica whose rosaces (1) are all aglow with the radiance of the setting sun. What wealth of imagination in a work that seemed so little to admit of it. Here we see none of that vapid maundering about the adoration of woman with which, both in season and out of season, we are now greeted even by those who know not what it is to love. This book will teach those who are still strangers to Rancé's writings that there is in our language another gem of the purest water."

"At first there was a profound silence, the result alike of admiration and astonishment. It required no less than two years for wounded self love and passion to recover from the shock. But courage came at last and the battle began." The campaign was opened in Holland, where French literature had its echo, a Protestant echo which gave back the sound incorrectly, harsh and dry. "The real motives of the conversion of the Abbot of la Trappe," by Laroque, to which I have already referred, is a reply to the "Duties of the Monastic Life." According to the taste of the times it is in the form of a dialogue. Timocrates and Philander discourse about Rancé's book. Timocrates is a good sort of fellow, who, here and there expresses the warmest admiration of the work. Philander reproves him and pretends that the book of the solitary of la Trappe is not worth a d—(ne vaut pas le diable). He accuses Rancé of treating Scripture with contempt; of wishing to play the savant at any price, of quoting Aristop-

(1) A term in architecture signifying a rose-like ornament.

hanes, &c. "I am very curious to know," says he, "when he read this poet? Was it in his youthful days, before he left this wicked world of ours, or after? Really I am rather slow to believe than he can so well recollect a book read more than thirty years ago: indeed I am somewhat tempted to think that he must have whiled away the heavy hours of cloistered life by sily peeping, now and then, into the forbidden pages of this funny Greek." Mark the sting in this little piece of disingenuous criticism, and yet containing a touch of Attic salt withal.

"De Rancé's work had attained to its third edition, when at length, amid the gloom of the cloister, a sound of paper and dust, (*un bruit de papier et de poussière*) was heard."

"It was Mabillon who was girding his loins for battle. He had not grown grey, amid his folios; he could not look around him and behold the mouldering records of the dawn of the monarchy, and yet allow it to be said to his teeth, that he was a fool for his pains, and that he had simply lost his time, in wandering through the mazes of the past. The compiler of the '*Vetera Analecta*,' felt himself obliged to sustain the cause of the learned, of whom he was himself the glory." The two learned champions, on entering the lists, seemed panoplied (*cuirassés*) with Latin and Greek. When we pretend to break a lance with such savants, we only shew our weakness in this "enlightened and conquering monarchy," as Bossuet observes. Father Mabillon proceeds methodically, and leaves not a single position undefended. An experienced investigator, he extends his researches, on all sides, and never makes a step that he does not lift up a whole century to our gaze. Rich in antiquarian lore, he says, like Lacordaire, "Time will hold the pen after me."

He thus addresses the young Benedictines of the congre-

gation of St. Maur; "It is to you, dearest brethren, that I am compelled to address this work, since it is specially for you that it has been undertaken and composed. Bear in mind, I pray you, that I do not intend to convert our monasteries into mere academies for the cultivation of science. If the great Apostle gloried only in the knowledge of Jesus Christ crucified, even so should we propose to ourselves the same, in our studies. It is true,—St. Paul has said it,—knowledge without charity puffeth up; but it is equally true that nothing with God's grace, leads us more securely to humility, than knowledge, since nothing makes us better acquainted with our nothingness, our corruption and our misery." Thus does the illustrious savant fling this ingenious interpretation between him and Rancé's reproaches.

The very type of his book, with its capitals borrowed from those of the monumental inscriptions, with which he was familiar, is characteristic of the man. Leaving to scholastic theologians the questions of obediential power, and of the manner in which material fire acts on the souls of the damned, he proceeds, at once, to grapple with the subject.

"What caused me to hesitate at first," says he in the introduction to the work, "about the composition of my book is that the great servant of God, who now reflects so much honor on the monastic state, has expressed himself in so noble and excellent a manner, on this subject, that after him success becomes difficult. On one point, I can readily agree with him, that if all monks were like his, and if all superiors were as enlightened as he, study would occupy only a small place in the lives of religious, because, in such a case, the superior would supply the place of books. But it is difficult, not to say impossible, for all communities to

“enjoy this advantage.” After this holy courtesy, Mabillon plunges in *medias res*. Reason and learning both summon him to conquer. He asserts that monks are bound to study, that the illustrious men who have flourished in monasteries abundantly prove that letters were there cultivated, and that the monastic libraries afford another proof of the same fact. He speaks of the foundation of the Abbeys of Bec (1) and of the Carthusians. He shews that the monasteries of the East also occupied themselves with literature, witness St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, Rufinus, Cassian, and his companion Germanus; Mark, the Solitary; and St. Nilus. He refers to the monastery of Lerins, in the West, the Abbey of Monte Cassino, of St. Columbanus, the schools attached to cathedrals and monasteries, the learned men that issued from them, the famous Gerbert, Lupus, of Ferrières, Lanfranc, and Anselm, &c. He points out that the monks, by their labours as copyists, have preserved to us the works of the ancients; that councils and popes, so far from condemning monastic studies, even enforced them by special enactments. As regards France, he says we need not go beyond the ordinances of Charlemagne and of St. Louis.

This treatise on monastic studies overflows with the profoundest learning. The author disdains not even the minutest details. Wondrous age, which could behold Mabillon descend from his great eminence to assume the humble office of a poor pedagogue, and Bossuet lay aside his laurels in order to teach little children their catechism!

The book contains no eloquence to oppose to Rancé’s glowing periods; but it exhibits reasoning powers of the

(1) The name of Bec will remain for ever associated with the memory of Lanfranc, who, an Italian by birth, became a monk of that famous Norman abbey, and died Archbishop of Canterbury. The splendid church of Bec was founded by Lanfranc, and built chiefly at the expense of the poor. *Opus pulchrum et maximum solis pauperum expensis.*—Mabillon, *Acta S. S. Ord S. Ben.* t. ix.

highest order, a touching mildness, a nameless something—I know not what—that captivates the heart. “Everything,” says he, in conclusion, “passes away, save charity alone.”

Rancé took fire on finding himself attacked by Mabillon. His rejoinder is as learned as the reply of the Benedictine, but it is sophistical. If his conclusions be not sound, his eloquence, inspired by his passion for suffering, is admirable. Rancé takes up one by one Mabillon’s propositions, and successively refutes them, by examples. As there are necessarily weak points in every great work, the Abbot of La Trappe seizes, with consummate ability, on those which he finds in the treatise of the Monk of St. Germain. “Mark, a disciple of “St. Benedict’s (so we are told), is praised for having composed some fine poetry. What a singular achievement for “a monk! I feel quite convinced that St. Benedict never “bequeathed this attainment to him in his will, and that he “never taught it by his example. Only fancy, a solitary “become a poet! Lupus, Abbot of Ferrières, was wrong in “asking Pope Benedict III. to send him copies of Cicero’s “*De Oratore*, of the twelve books of Quintilian, and the “*Commentary* of Donatus on Terence. He would have done “much better had he occupied himself, in the depth of his “cloister, in lamenting his own and the world’s sins, and in “sustaining his brethren, who in that iron age required all “possible help and consolation.” Rancé dashes, with characteristic impetuosity, at the learned monks, and tries to break their ranks.\* He fails to perceive that he only makes them appear more amiable. He laughs at Hubald, author of 130 verses in praise of the bald! Rancé was right, but what does that prove, except that he retained a lingering love of mundane railery.

\* Cardinal Bona says that Rancé’s zeal amounted almost to fury in anything he embraced. A striking anecdote is related of him before his conversion. Meeting one day, Harlay de Chanvallon, Archbishop of Paris, he said “*Je matin prêcher comme un ange, ce soir chasser comme un diable!*”

Mabillon's maxim was "No surrender!" He returns to the charge in his "Reflexions," where he piles up fresh proofs in favour of monastic studies. These writings of Mabillon are singularly free from all trace of passion. A prudent regard for others' susceptibilities, great moderation and good sense, a tender piety, learning humble and modest, a holy politeness reign throughout. He ends with these touching words:—

"I have tried to observe all the rules of moderation, but I dare not flatter myself that nothing of a contrary kind has escaped me, and that some inadvertence has not defeated the best and purest intentions. Would that you could see the bottom of my heart, rev. Father (for you will allow me to address you these words at the close of my book), in order that you may there discover the sentiments which I entertain both for your person and your community. I am far from condemning the system adopted by you, as regards study, but if you think your brethren strong enough to dispense with it, pray leave to others a support which they so much require. Should you deem it expedient to reply, I beg of you to grasp well my meaning, as I have endeavoured to do yours, but, in God's name, let us not wander beyond the limits of our dispute, nor commit ourselves to anything which would violate Christian peace and charity. Write, then, if you will, against the possible abuse of study and science, but, at the same time, pray spare the legitimate use of both, as of things good in themselves, and capable of being employed for the best purposes in religious communities. It is charity which, by the union of hearts joining the labours of the one with the studies of the other class, so operates that those who study share the merit of those who labour, and those who labour profit by the enlightenment of those who study. I wish, with all my heart, that this should also be our lot. Happy indeed would we be if such

“should be the fruit of our discussion, and if our sentiments, “opposed on the subject of learning, should at least be united “in the spirit of charity. Excuse me, Rev. Father, (for I “must conclude in the words of the great teacher), excuse “me if I have spoken with a certain degree of freedom, “and be assured that I have never for a moment thought of “outraging your susceptibilities. ‘Non ad contumeliam “tuam sed ad defensionem meam.’ Nevertheless, if even “here I have erred, I ask you, once again, to pardon me.”

We have here none of that proud humility which only seeks to glorify itself. Mabillon speaks in the fulness of his heart. No lingering relic of self love corrupts the sincerity of his declarations. Such are the effects produced by religion! How different from this gentleness is that bitter spirit of contention which is to be found in the learned disputes of Milton and Saumaise, and in the criticisms of Scaliger! Here the action was suited to the word, and we find Mabillon at La Trappe, surrounded by the respectful attentions of De Rancé. (1) On the 4th of June, 1693, De Rancé thus writes to the Abbé Nicaise:—“Father Mabillon arrived here seven or “eight days ago. Our interview was exactly what it ought “to be. It is difficult to find more humility and learning “than in this good father.”

Bossuet, with his usual penetration, seized the knot of the difficulty, by distinguishing between the state of a solitary and that of a cœnobite. The dispute did not end there. The learned monks were all up in arms. Dom Claude de Vert, under the pseudonym of Brother Colombart, flung himself into the fray. The indefatigable Rancé was ready to tilt against all comers!”

(1) When these two eminent men met at La Trappe they flung themselves on their knees, as if each would ask the others pardon for any hasty word used in the heat of discussion. Then they clasped each other in a fraternal embrace.

We need not, however, enter further into the controversy, the history of which has been written at length by the Benedictine, Joseph Porta. For most readers the above extract, from Chateaubriand's "Life of De Rancé" will probably be sufficient. The general current of feeling was with Mabillon in this great monastic duel. Liebnitz, writing to Magliabecchi, says that if Rancé's views had prevailed, at an earlier period, it was all over with learning. (1)

The dispute seems to have been as old as the days of St. Jerome, who, in one of his letters, denounces the error of those who confounded piety with ignorance. "These men," says the saint, "style themselves disciples of the fishermen, "as if to be ignorant and to be holy were one and the same thing. (2).

If St. Jerome gives us the opinion of the ancients, Fleury gives us those of the moderns on the subject. "Ignorance is "good for nothing, and I have never been able to find that "pretended simplicity which is said to be the safeguard of "virtue. What I have found is, that in the darkest ages, "and among the most ignorant people we always find the "spectacle of the most abominable vices. (3). Rancé, on the other hand, might appeal to the authority of the greatest thinkers. Plato says that absolute ignorance is by no means the evil which it is usually represented to be. (4). In the year of Rome 591, philosophers were banished from the city by the Senate, and six years later Cato recommended the

(1) Si ea invaluisse opinio, nullam eruditionem haberemus. Constat enim libros et litteras monasteriorum ope fuisse conservatas

(2) Crassam rusticitatem illi solam pro sanctitate habent : piscatorum se discipulos asserentes, quasi idcirco sancti sint, si nihil scirent.—Ep. ad Marcellam.

(3) L'ignorance n'est bonne à rien, et je ne sais où se trouve cette prétendue simplicité qui conserve la vertu. Ce que je sais c'est que dans les siècles les plus ténébreux et chez les nations les plus grossières on voyait régner les vices les plus abominables.—Fleury, Hist. Eccles, Discour, 111<sup>me</sup>.

(4) De Legibus, L. vii.



adoption of the same measure against Carneades, Athenian ambassador and philosopher, lest the Roman youth might be corrupted by Grecian refinements and subtleties. Seneca was of opinion that learning and piety could not exist together: Caesar says that the bravest enemies he encountered in Gaul were also the most ignorant. (1). Descending to modern times, we find Boileau thus express himself in a letter to his friend Brienne:—"Poetry appears to me to be nothing better than folly. I speak as a philosopher, not as a Christian. It is in vain that your shepherd in soutane, I mean M. de Maucroix, deplores the loss of the 'Lutrin.' Should anything make me destroy it, assuredly it will not be devotion, but the poor opinion I have of that and of all my other works. You will probably tell me that I am just now suffering from a violent fit of humility. Nothing of the kind. Never in my life did I feel prouder than I now do, and if I think poorly of my own works I think more so of those of others. Not one of our poets can I endure, not even when I am myself the object of their praise."

Rousseau, like Boileau, was a *Parcus deorum cultor et infrequens*, a man not embarrassed by much religious fervour, yet he expresses himself precisely as De Rancè.

"My friend," he says, "never discuss, for by discussion you enlighten neither yourself nor others. . . . Ignorance never did any harm; error alone is dangerous to man."

It does not seem to have occurred to the author of "Emile" that ignorance is, for the most part, the parent of error.

(1) Senec. Ep. 95. *Postquam docti prodierunt boni desunt. Horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgæ, propterea quod a cultu atque humanitate Provincie longissime absunt, minimeque ad eos Mercatores sæpe commeant atque eâ qua ad effeminandos animos pertinent important.* — *Com. de Bel. Gal. L.I.C.I.* It would seem from this that Caesar thought the arts of civilization to be fatal to the military spirit. But how can this be reconciled with the well-known gallantry of the Roman troops? In our own day war is a game in which other things being equal success is the prize of the ablest player.

In a word, Rancé's views might be summed up in a syllogism, of which Pope has supplied the major and Pascal the minor premiss.

A little learning is a dangerous thing,  
All learning is only a little,  
Ergo, &c. (1).

Whether Rancé was right in putting asunder what God seemed to have joined in Paradise (the Trees of Knowledge and of Life) may, however, be questioned.

After seeing Mabillon soar to the summit of Parnassus, we next see him descend, as it were, to the depths of Erebus. He now appears bearing aloft the lamp of science amid the gloom of the catacombs. The fruit of his investigations in these venerable vaults, at once the cradle and the grave of infant Christianity (2), was given to the world in his work "*De Cultu Sanctorum ignotorum*." It has reference to the relics contained in the Roman catacombs, and which the piety of the faithful had, from the earliest ages, invested with the greatest veneration. The question arose—Do the catacombs contain the remains of saints only, or may we expect

(1) Or more scientifically thus:—

Limited knowledge is dangerous.  
All knowledge is limited knowledge,  
Ergo, &c.

The remark of Pascal is well known, that the greatest learning was only another kind of ignorance.—Compare St. Paul, 1 Cor., C. I., v. 17 to 20.

The prevailing sentiment of cultivated Catholics on what may be called profane studies has been admirably expressed by Mgr. Dupanloup, in his "*Discours de Reception*, addressed to the French Academy.

Speaking of the efforts of the Greek philosophers to penetrate the night of paganism, his lordship says:—"We behold here the supreme effort of fallen humanity to grasp again the broken chain of ancient tradition, and recover the light which God caused still to shine, like a last and redeeming reflection of His truth, in order not to leave himself without testimony (Acts xiv., 16) in the midst of nations, and to shew that the creature, though degraded, was not disowned. Yes, it was by express command of a merciful Providence that the mind of man was enabled to cast about him those splendid lights which have sufficed to crown the works of ancient genius with undying glory, &c."

(2) La religion a pris naissance aux tombeaux, et les tombeaux ne peuvent se passer d'elle.—Génie du Christianisme IVme. Partie LIV. 11.

to find there those of both saints and sinners? Mabillon addresses himself to this question with his usual candour and learning. One fact was clear, only Christians were buried there. That all those Christians were saints was the more general opinion. It is not, however, that of Mabillon. It would have somewhat shocked Rancé to learn that the Benedictine's chief authority for this conclusion was a poet. Yet so it was. In Prudentius, the poet of the Catacombs, (1) we have ample and authentic information on this subject. The poet, however, was not his only authority. The various records of ecclesiastical history, and his own observations enabled him to form a sound opinion on the subject. He was led into this inquiry by observing (as the Bollandists had done before him (2), that veneration was sometimes paid to relics which were not proved to be those of saints. The work of Mabillon was simply a protest against a practice which might be productive of grave abuse. His conclusions are clearly and logically worked out, and would seem to be quite in harmony with previous decrees of the Congregation of Rites. Nevertheless, certain Catholics, more pious perhaps than learned, were alarmed at the boldness of his views, and fancied they saw in them a blow struck, not merely at the abuse, but the use of relics. Nicéron says that Mabillon's book narrowly escaped being placed on the Index, and that he became in consequence excessively troubled. Some correspondence took

- (1) "Innumeros cineres sanctorum Romulà in urbe vidimus  
Plurima litterulis signata sepulcra loquuntur  
Martyris aut nomen aut epigramma aliquod :  
Sunt et muta tamen, tacitas claudentia tumbas,  
Marmora quæ solum significant numerum."

Prudentius, *Peristephanon*, Hymn xi.

The poet here indicates very clearly the mode of distinguishing the tombs of saints from those of others; there was either an inscription or a number, the former containing the saint's name or his epitaph, the latter denoting how many were buried beneath a certain slab. Those which had no inscription and no number were not the tombs of saints.

- (2) See the *Acta Sanctorum*, Maius (20) t. v.

place, the result of which was that Mabillon, without surrendering, so far qualified his opinions as to escape the threatened blow. In this little episode, Mabillon received the approval of several eminent ecclesiastics, and among them that of Fléchier, the celebrated pulpit orator and Bishop of Nîmes. His Lordship addressed to the Benedictine a letter which, considering the importance of the subject, and the rank of the writer, is so remarkable that I venture to quote it here :—

“Rev. Father,—I have received, with great gratitude, and read, with much pleasure, the little volume which you were good enough to send me, and in which you treat of the respect paid to unknown Saints. It required a man of your learning and judgment to enlighten us, as to the mode of distinguishing, amid the gloom of sepulchres, the remains of saints from those of sinners, and of thus regulating, agreeably to certain definite principles, the honours which, though due to one only, are sometimes paid to both classes. Long have I desired the suppression of certain superstitions which have crept in relative to those bodies called ‘holy,’ but on which, in all probability, the waters of baptism were never sprinkled. The crowd is naturally credulous and the authorities are sometimes over generous of such gifts. Not a single grand seigneur returns from the Eternal City without bringing with him the body of some martyr, to whom he makes it a point of honour to found a feast and a regular devotion in some favourite church. Hence, in various places, false narratives, and groundless devotions. Your dissertation will tend greatly to the knowledge of the one, and the suppression of the other abuse.—Nîmes, 2 May, 1696.” (1)

But while the enlightened piety of Mabillon protested against the abuse, he carefully defended the use of relics. This

(1) Quoted in Mabillon's “Oeuvres posthumes,” t. 1. p. 314.

he did in the case of a celebrated relic, known as the "Holy Tear of Vendôme," (*la Sainte Larme de Vendôme*). The genuineness of this had been denied by Jean Baptiste Thiers, Curé of Champron, in the diocese of Chartres, upon whose shoulders the mantle of the celebrated Curé of Meudon seemed to have fallen. Thiers, like Yorrick, was a "fellow of infinite jest," and one who was wont to "set the table in a roar." "Had anyone," says Chateaubriand, "offered him his choice of being Rabelais or King of France, we know what his decision would have been." Thiers' pen was prolific. Among his numerous works is a "History of Wigs," in which the origin and progress of these useful appendages are traced with great learning and ingenuity, such as the gravity of the subject demanded. Occasionally, however, the comic is so blended with the serious that the reader has reason to suspect he is being "wigged" by the witty curé. His writings (flavoured as they are with Attic salt) are still read with interest, and Voltaire has assigned him a niche in the Temple of Fame. (1)

Such was the man whom Mabillon now combated. The history of the relic referred to is somewhat singular. Stripped of the web of legend which the piety of the middle ages had woven around it, the narrative runs briefly thus. Our Saviour, while standing at the tomb of Lazarus, dropped a tear, which an Angel caught up and presented to Magdalen. It afterwards passed into the hands of the Emperor Constantine, and was presented by one of his successors, Maximin, to a certain German or Flemish Knight, named Godfrey, in return for valuable services rendered by the latter. Godfrey brought it to Germany, from which it passed in 1042 into France, where it was solemnly deposited in the church of the Holy Trinity, at Vendôme. (2)

(1) See "Le Siècle de Louis XIV."

(2) The event called forth all the poetic powers of the liturgical writers of

Thiers maintains that all this is purely legendary, that it is a very venerable, very respectable, but very groundless belief. Mabillon differs from Thiers, yet, in a matter of such remote antiquity, where it is so difficult to disentangle fact from fiction, he proceeds with the caution which might naturally be expected from one of his learning and experience. Nowhere does he distinctly commit himself to a belief in the authenticity of the relic, and his book is therefore rather a defence of the good faith of his brethren of Vendôme than of the genuineness of the "Holy Tear."

The subject seems to be just one of those on which a good deal might be said, on both sides, and on which a little respectful doubt appears permissible.

It was about this period (1700) that Mabillon was disturbed by a very distressing report which had been industriously circulated in England, to the effect that he had apostatised! It is scarcely necessary to say that he lost no time in branding this statement as a pure invention and a calumny. He is "a docile and obedient child of the Catholic Church, in whose pale alone can be found peace, piety and truth. In her bosom he had lived, and, with her blessing on his head, he hoped to die. No doubt had ever dimmed the lamp of his faith, but, even if it had, a single glance at England and her myriad sects, all starting from the same premises to arrive at different conclusions, and all cordially hating each other for the love of God, would soon have dispelled his hesitation." The logical development of

the Gallican church. These inspirations of the sacred muse of France have been inserted in the Missals of Vendôme, Chartres, Mans and Paris, (date 1535 to 1585).

O, lachryma gloriosa Christi præclarissima!  
 Gemma cœli pretiosa, Lympha purissima  
 A Christoque nata, angelo collecta,  
 Magdalene data, Maximino vecta  
 Imperatori Græcorum, inde presentata  
 Gaufrido, Vindocinorum ad locum translata, &c.

Protestantism, he says, is either deism or Socinianism. (1) He concludes his letter, which is addressed to the Catholics of England, by commending himself to their prayers and extolling their loyalty to the old faith, amid countless persecutions.

In this letter, he shews himself to be quite au courant of affairs in England. His knowledge on this subject is very complete and very accurate, and may perhaps be explained by his relations with the exiled court of James II., at St. Germain, where he was always an honoured guest.

In 1702, he wrote a volume on the reform of the monastic prisons, in which he displays his characteristic gentleness and humanity.

Many of the views here expressed are marked by great practical sagacity and have since been adopted into the penal codes of different countries, both in the old and new worlds.

"The learned Mabillon," says Gibbon, "seems to have been inspired on this occasion, by the genius of humanity. For such an effort, I can forgive his defence of the 'Holy Tear of Vendôme.'" (2)

In 1703, appeared the first volume of his *Annals of the Benedictine order*, a work of the greatest research, and which may be considered the crowning glory of a long and illustrious life.

In this history, which runs through six folio volumes, he traces the rise and progress of his order, with a clearness, a completeness, an impartiality which are above all praise. Unlike many other works, on similar subjects, it is no mere, dry, colourless detail of half-forgotten facts, rescued, with superfluous learning, from the tomb of oblivion.

(1) This was also the opinion of Bossuet and Gibbon, see the "*Variations*," *passim* and the "*Decline and Fall*," c. 54. The passage in Gibbon (which will be found at the close of the chapter referred to) is very remarkable.

(2) *Decline and Fall*, c. 37.

In Mabillon's hands, the past lives again. He seizes the *disjecta membra*, the scattered bones of history, classifies them, touches them with the divine wand of genius, and breathes into them the breath of life. Thus transformed, they pass, before us, with all the charm and freshness of reality.

The valuable dissertations on chronology, laws, customs, manners, with which this work abounds, amply attest his vast erudition and his intimate acquaintance with the soundest canons of historical criticism.

This work worthily closes the long list of Mabillon's literary labors. His race was now nearly run, the sands of life were falling fast, and the night, when no man can work, was approaching.

His death, which took place in December, 1707, was worthy of his life—calm, peaceful, and resigned.

His modesty, gentleness, and charity, his humility joined to so much learning, and his eminent services to religion and society, warrant us in believing that, in the Kingdom of Heaven, as in the Republic of Letters, a distinguished place has been assigned to John Mabillon.

Du Pin thus sums up his character.

"It would be difficult to praise Fr. Mabillon as he deserves. "The verdict of public opinion and the general esteem of all "savants form a better panegyric than any we could pronounce. His profound learning is known by his works: his "modesty, his humility, his mildness, his piety, are equally "known to all who had the slightest acquaintance with him.

"His style is bold, pure, clear and methodical, free from "all affectation, and all superfluous ornaments, as became the "gravity of the subjects which he treated." (*Bibliothèque des auteurs ecclésiastiques*).

The works referred to, in the foregoing Memoir, con-



stitute the chief productions of Mabillon's pen : but there are many others.

Those who desire further particulars regarding the life and writings of this remarkable man, may consult the following :—The Life of Mabillon, by Ruinart ; the Bibliothèque Historique et Critique of Le Cerf ; the Mémoires of Nicéron, tome 7th ; the Eloge de Mabillon, by De Boze ; the Histoire Littéraire, of Tassin ; the Biographie Universelle ; Moreri's Dictionnaire Historique ; Dupin's Bibliothèque des Auteurs Ecclesiastiques ; M. Chavin de Malan's Histoire de Mabillon, &c., &c.

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#### BERNARD DE MONTFAUCON.

NEXT in importance to Mabillon comes Bernard de Montfaucon. Unlike Mabillon, he was by birth, a patrician, his father, Timoleon de Montfaucon, belonging to the highest noblesse in France.

Bernard was born, on the 13th January, 1655, at the Château of Soulage, in the diocese of Narbonne, and, like most young men of good family, was destined, from his earliest years, for the army. In 1672, he entered the Corps of Cadets of Perpignan, and in the ensuing year, he followed the flag of Turenne, in the German campaign of the great Marshal. On this occasion, he served as a volunteer, and we have little hesitation in believing that, in so doing, he was animated rather by a sentiment of duty, than by any love of the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war," or any desire to "seek the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth."

The rough life of a soldier had as few charms for Mont-

faucou as for Des Cartes who had also tried his "prentice hand" at the profession of arms. Therefore, after a few years campaigning, he sheaths his sword, bids farewell to Mars, and devotes himself to the service of his first love, the Muses. His great love of study and retirement soon led him to take another step, and in May, 1676, we find the young noble who had so lately laid aside the soldier's gay uniform, assume the grave habit of the Benedictine order. This event occurred in the monastery of la Daurade, at Toulouse.

Shortly after he was transferred to that of Sorreze, so justly celebrated for the number and importance of its Greek MSS. Montfaucon at that time, was ignorant of Greek, but his thirst of knowledge quickly prompts him to possess himself of the key of these treasures. His labours were crowned with signal success, and a short time saw him master of the noblest language ever spoken by human lips. The use to which he converted the knowledge thus acquired we shall presently see.

Soon after we find him transferred successively to Bordeaux and Paris, where he devoted himself assiduously to the study of the oriental languages.

If it be true, as the Emperor Charles V. used to say, that one is as often a man as he knows languages, we shall be led to estimate Montfaucon's value as equivalent to that of many men. He successively mastered the difficulties of Hebrew, Chaldean, Syriac, Coptic, &c., in fact qualified himself for the office of "interpreter at the Tower of Babel," as Lord Byron said of Cardinal Mezzofanti: De Rancé would doubtless have deemed all this study much ado about nothing; "*beau coup de bruit peu de fruit.*" But it had a direct and immediate bearing on matters of the highest moment to the Church. All these, and other languages beside, had been employed in her service (1) and no one could pretend to the

(1) Such, for instance, were the Arabic, Armenian, Ethiopian, &c.

character of a learned ecclesiologist who had not made a certain progress in some of the Eastern tongues. Gradually, however, the Greek language seems to have supplanted all its rivals. Nor was this surprising. The Christian Church, first propagated in the Roman Empire, where education was entirely of the Greco-Roman school, found herself face to face with these two great literatures. The languages of Greece and Rome thus became, by a decree of Providence, the natural vehicles for the expression of Christian thought. "Two nations," says an eminent German savant, "endowed with nature's noblest gifts, seemed to have laboured, during so many ages, in carrying their languages to the highest degree of perfection, only in order that, through them, Christian ideas might be presented, in all their power and plenitude, to the world. The Greek, in particular, production of a spiritual people, of a profound and penetrating genius, long the organ of a sublime science, nowhere else to be found, united to a rare wealth of terms, a precision still more rare, and was therefore, *before all others*, appropriate to the science of the religion of the Word. . . . The Christian Church was not ungrateful for the service thus rendered to her. Immortal and exempt from all trace of decay, she communicated a portion of her own permanence to works originally designed for only one age and one people. It is perfectly certain that had not Christianity, during the long lapse of ages, employed the Greek and Roman languages in her service, had she not confided to them the first elements of her history, they would both have long since perished, and with them all the treasures of ancient learning.

"As regards the Hebrew, it was too poor and too exclusively national ever to become the vehicle of thoughts which were addressed to the minds of every age and every clime. Besides, it was too allegorical and too figurative to give accurate expression to the great dogmas of Christianity.

“The Semitic languages, admirably adapted for the purposes “ of poetry, were totally wanting in precision and unfit “ for the ends of science.” (1)

These remarks will enable us to understand Montfaucon’s diligence, in the study of the Eastern tongues and particularly of the Greek.

He also became a proficient in “Numismatics” and, in 1694, was named curator of the valuable collection of medals, then existing at the Abbey of St. Germain des Prés. The knowledge thus acquired was of vast use to him, in the compilation of his great work, “Antiquité Expliquée.”

His début, however, in the literary world, was his critical examination of the history and authenticity of the book of Judith : “La Verité de l’histoire de Judith.” For this which appeared in 1690, his great linguistic attainments peculiarly qualified him. The “Reformers,” Luther, Grotius, Whitaker, and others, had impugned the authority of this book and rejected it as uncanonical. Montfaucon defends its authority as a historical record, and its canonicity as a portion of the Divine Revelation. A vast field of inquiry was here opened up and Montfaucon proved himself fully equal to the labours which it demanded.

The work was well received by the public, and still remains one of the highest authorities on the subject to which it refers. Bossuet addressed the following letter to the author to congratulate him on the success of his book. “Rev. Father,—I have received and read with pleasure your “ ‘Judith,’ and I am greatly gratified to find that men of

(1) Mæhler, *Patrolog.* t. I. It may be objected to this view of the Semitic languages, as contrasted with the great Arian family, that the Arabs in Spain attained to considerable eminence as philosophers. We should remember, however, that the Arabian philosophy was cast in a purely Grecian mould. Avicenna and Averrhoes were merely Plato and Socrates in an Arab dress. The voice was the voice of Jacob, but the hands were the hands of Esau. An interesting account of the Arabian philosophy will be found in Mr. Lewes’ “History of Philosophy,” (edition of 1867) vol. 2nd.

“your ability labour to facilitate the study of Scripture, by smoothing down the difficulties which are there to be found. I am also acquainted with your other learned labours and all this obliges me to assure you of the special esteem in which I hold you. Versailles, April 10, 1690.”

The subject, however, is by no means, free from difficulties. The principal is of a chronological kind: when did the events recorded in the Book of Judith occur? The Greek and Syriac texts seem to point to a period *posterior* to the Babylonian captivity; the version of St. Jerome (known as the Vulgate) to a period *anterior* to the same event. Montfaucon adopts the former opinion; the latter is now more generally followed. Each opinion has peculiar difficulties, which it is impossible to dispose of completely, by any mode of interpretation. This embarrass is enhanced by the fact that St. Jerome, who translated it from the Chaldean, at the request of Saints Paula and Eustochium, admits that his version is not literally, but only substantially accurate. (1) It is not found in the Jewish canon, but it is frequently quoted by Christian writers, from the earliest ages. (2) St. Jerome says that its canonicity was defined by the Council of Nice, but there is no trace of any canon, on this subject, in the acts of the council which have come down to us. (3) The matter may, however, be now considered as finally settled, for Catholics at least, the Council of Trent having recognized its canonicity. (4)

(1) *Magis sensum e sensu, quam ex verbo verbum transferens, multorum codicum varietatem vitiosissimam amputavi.* S. Hieron, Præf. in Lib. Judith. It would appear from this that the Saint exercised a wide discretion in the use of the pruning knife. See on this subject a learned paper by M. Gibert, in tome XXI. Mem. Acad. Inscip.

(2) See the following: S. Clemens Romanus, Ep. I ad Cor.: Constit Apostol. L. viii. C. 2. Can. 85; Clemens Alex. Strom. iv; Orig. Hom. 19 in Jerem; Tertull de Monog. C. 17; St. Amb. De Officiis, L. iii.; S. Aug. De Doctrina Christiana, ii. 8; Popes Innocent I. and Gelasius, &c.

(3) *Hunc librum Synodus Nicæna in numero sacrarum scripturarum legitur computasse.* Præf in Jud.

(4) Conc. Trid. Sess. iv.

In this, the last great assizes of the Christian world, the following five points were decided.

First, that certain books called the Sacred Scriptures exist.

Second, that God is the author of them.

Third, that the books of Scripture are such and such.

(Here follows the enumeration of the canonical books, which includes that of Judith.)

Fourth, these books in their integrity are canonical.

Fifth, that the Vulgate is authentic.

This is all that the council has decided on the subject. Nothing is said on the question as to the *mode* of inspiration, whether it be verbal or only material, and this matter may therefore be, and is considered, an "open question" among theologians. I shall have occasion presently to revert briefly to this subject, when I come to consider Montfaucon's edition of certain works of Eusebius of Cæsarea. (1)

It is worthy of note that the Tridentine canon is the same as that of the Councils of Florence, in the fourteenth century; of Constantinople, in the sixth; of Carthage, in the fourth; and of the Pontifical decrees of Popes Innocent I. and Gelasius. (2)

In 1698, appeared Montfaucon's "incomparable work," (3) the celebrated edition of the works of St. Athanasius. His knowledge of Greek, his immense learning, and his critical judgment enabled him to rise to the full height of the great subjects here discussed. With the life and writings of St. Athanasius is inseparably bound up the

(1) The Anglican Church rejects the book of Judith as uncanonical, and appeals to St. Jerome, but does not specify any passage in his writings where the book is declared uncanonical. (See Article VI. of the Church of England). St. Jerome's opinion on this subject (referred to in Article VI.) will be found in his preface to the books of Solomon. It is remarkable that the article just referred to recognises the Church as the proper judge of the canonicity of the Sacred Scriptures.

(2) See Mansi, Sac. Concil. nov. et ampliss. coll. Florentiæ, 1764, in fol.

(3) These are the words of Dupin Bibl. des aut. eccles. du XVII. Siècle. See also Fabricius, Bibliotheca Græca.

record of the most momentous crisis in the whole history of Christianity. "We have seldom" says Gibbon "an opportunity of observing, either in active or speculative life, what effect may be produced, or what obstacles may be surmounted by the force of a single mind, when it is inflexibly applied to the pursuit of a single object. The immortal name of Athanasius will never be separated from the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, to whose defence he consecrated every moment and every faculty of his being." (1) The publication of this work at once placed Montfaucon in the foremost rank of savants, while it added another and most brilliant gem to the literary crown of the Benedictines.

The work is dedicated to Pope Innocent XII., by whom it was very graciously received. It contains, first, the writings attributed to Athanasius, which are divided into three classes, the genuine, the doubtful, and the spurious. Among the last he places the celebrated Symbol, "Qui cum que Vult," commonly called the Athanasian Creed. (2)

Secondly, we have a valuable preface by Montfaucon, in which he examines, at length, the opinions of St. Athanasius, whom he styles the "Father of Modern Theology." Here it is not necessary to follow him in his able analysis of the Athanasian doctrines; it will therefore suffice for us to learn that the saint was the great defender of the Nicene faith, the founder of Western Monasticism, and the man in whom (as St. Gregory of Nazianzum writes) "Providence had long recognized the fitting instrument of its grandest designs." St. Athanasius is beyond all question, the greatest figure in the history of the Greek Church.

Passing from the matter to the manner, we learn that the

(1) Decline and Fall, ch. XXI.

(2) This appears to be now the opinion of the best scholars. See Tillemont Mem. Eccles. t. VIII. Petav. Dogm. Theol. t. II. Acta Sanctorum, Maius (22). Pagi. Crit. in Bar. ad an 340, N. XI. Ussher, Isaac Vossus, &c.

style of the saint is pure, elegant and suggestive of the golden age of Greek literature. Correct without dryness, bold without coarseness, eloquent without declamation, the style of Athanasius exhibits a happy combination of all the best qualities of the East and West.

Like the East he is speculative, subtle and profound; like the West he is also clear, methodical and practical. Applying Buffon's maxim, "Le style c'est l'homme," we find in the writings of this Father the most faithful mirror of his mind and character; genius of the highest order united with fearless courage and the greatest practical sagacity in the management of affairs. (1)

Towards the close of the Preface, are given certain details regarding the honours paid to those who died in exile for the faith, and who thus ranked as Martyrs; and, finally we are presented with an interesting account of the origin of monasticism in the East, and its propagation in the West by St. Athanasius.

Thirdly, we have a life of the saint, by Montfaucon, who also gives the panegyric pronounced on the saint by Gregory of Nazianzum, and four biographies by ancient writers.

Fourthly, the work is enriched with notes, critical, historical, and polemical, which attest the learning and unwearied industry of the editor.

On the termination of his labours, Montfaucon applied for, and obtained, leave to start on a literary pilgrimage to Italy.

(1) In judging St. Athanasius I have in the main followed Montfaucon, but I have not confined myself to his critique. The most authentic information (besides what is derived from his own works) regarding the saint is to be found in the Greek historians, Socrates, Hist. Ecc. L.I. and III. Sozomen, L.II. and III. Theod. L.I.C. 25. Photius Bibliotheca. Among the western writers the following (in addition to Montfaucon) may be consulted: Sulpic. Sever. Hist. Sac. Tillemont, Mémoires, t. XIII. Dom Remy Ceillier Hist. des Auteurs Eccles. Hermant, Vie d'Athanase, &c. "The diligence of Tillemont and of the Benedictine editors," says Gibbon, "has collected every fact and examined every difficulty."



Accompanied therefore by another Benedictine, (Dom Paul Brioy) he starts in May, 1698, for that glorious land which the combined influence of pagan and Christian civilisation has invested with a character of supreme and surpassing interest. Their first visit appears to have been made to Milan, and here the learned Frenchman had the advantage of being received by an equally learned Italian, like himself, a priest, Muratori. To none, more appropriately, than to the distinguished author of the "Antiquities of Italy," could be assigned the duty of acting as cicerone to the author of "Antiquity Explained." From Milan, Montfaucon proceeds successively to Modena, Mantua, and Venice, where, strange to say, his reception contrasted strongly with that which had first been accorded to him at Milan. The Bride of the Adriatic was either too bashful or too ill-humoured to display her charms before the gaze of the solitary of St. Germain. Not to all cities, not even to all Italian cities, is it granted to possess a Muratori. Ravenna atones for the inhospitality of Venice, and Montfaucon is eagerly welcomed within the walls of that ancient city, whose proudest privilege it is to treasure up, in her bosom, the dust of Italy's first and greatest poet. We can almost fancy the shade of the great Franciscan again revisiting the "glimpses of the moon," and his "canonized bones," "hearsed in earth, bursting their cerements," in order to avenge even a look of insult to his illustrious Benedictine brother. (1)

In September of the same year, we find Montfaucon arrived in the capital of the Christian world, where he was suitably received by Dom Claude Estiennot, then head and representative of the Benedictine order in Rome.

Montfaucon, wishing to avail himself of the oppor-

(1) It is stated, on excellent authority, that Dante died a Franciscan Monk.

tunities for study afforded by the libraries, monuments, temples, and ruins of Rome, proposes to make a lengthened stay in the Eternal City. But man proposes, &c. Scarcely had he made the necessary arrangements when a little storm arose which blew his projects to the wind and himself back to France. The Æolus that let loose this little breeze was a certain Father Langlois, of the society of Jesus, between whom and Montfaucon there arose a passage of arms relative to the eternal, inexhaustible subjects of Grace, Free Will, &c., that rock against which reason for ever dashes itself in vain. The controversy was ostensibly as to the correctness of the Benedictine edition of the works of St. Augustine, but the points really at issue were what I have just stated. Bossuet has well pointed out the barrenness of such attempts to fathom the unfathomable, which "shake our disposition with thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls. We possess," says he, "the opposite ends of the chain; Free-will on the one side, Grace and Providence on the other. Both of these are incontestable facts. If then our grasp be too weak to unite the links, shall we say they cannot be united by a steadier hand and more potent grasp than ours? Certainly not." Bossuet speaks here like a Cartesian philosopher, yet with some apparent inconsistency, he commits himself to the system of the Thomists, known as that of the "*Premotio Physica*." (1)

In this learned duel, Montfaucon came off victorious, time also fought for him, and the Benedictine edition of the works of St. Augustin is now unanimously admitted to be the best ever issued from the press.

In reading the history of these conflicts, provoked for the most part by the aggressive attitude of the Jesuits, we are tempted to ask, "*Tantæ ne animis cælestibus iræ?*"

(1) See *œuvres philos* de Bossuet *libre Arbitre* ch. IV. et seq. Il faut tenir toujours fortement comme 'les deux bouts de la chaîne, *quoiqu'* on ne voie *pas toujours le milieu* par où l'enchaînement se continue.

No Catholic is certainly ever likely to forget their splendid services to the Church, their eminence in the Republic of Letters, and their noble devotion to the Faith, which they, so often and in so many lands, sealed by the effusion of their blood. These are things that should not and cannot be forgotten. Yet when all is said that can be said, the fact still remains that the Jesuits, as a body, somewhat over-estimated their own importance, and were a little too ready to denounce, as enemies to the Church, all who declined to accept their shibboleth. Such disputes are highly regrettable, for while they display the learning of the combatants, they are fatal to charity, which is immeasurably above all learning.

The consequence of this dispute was that Montfaucon left Rome in March, 1701, though pressed to remain by the Holy Father, Clement XI., and by his own superiors.

He now returned to the Abbey of Saint Germain, where he soon after published an account of his Italian tour, under the title of "*Diarium Italicum*." This volume is a kind of handbook of Italian antiquities, libraries, museums, &c., such as a tourist of taste and talent might write or read. It involved him in some controversy which now possesses no interest. In 1703 appeared at London a translation of the book by the celebrated "Orator Henley" as he was styled, as great a curiosity in his way as any described by Montfaucon in his *Diary*. (1)

A further result of his visit to the great libraries of Italy appeared in 1706, in his "*Collectio Nova Patrum et Scrip-*

(1) Henley is described by Disraeli (*Calamities of Authors*) as a "scholar of great acquirements and no mean genius," &c. His hand was against all men and all men's hands against him. He had reason, however, to regret the day when he attacked Pope, who has "damned him to immortality," in a few stinging lines familiar to all readers of the *Twickenham Satirist* :—

But where each science lifts its modern type,  
History her pot : Divinity his pipe,  
While proud philosophy repines to show  
Dishonest sight ! his breeches rent below,  
Imbrowned with native bronze, lo ! Henley stands.

torum Græcorum," &c., two vols. folio. This contains the works of Eusebius, of Cæsarea, of Cosmas, of Ægyptius, and certain minor productions of St. Athanasius. There are also a Latin translation of the Greek text, notes, and learned critico-historical dissertations by Montfaucon.

In the fifth chapter of vol. 1 (the point at which for most readers the interest begins), he examines the doctrine of Eusebius, as to the mode of inspiration of Scripture. On this subject, there are two schools of theologians, the first (and much the older) opinion being that both the matter and the form (that is, the subject and the style, in other words) are inspired by the Holy Ghost; the second that the matter (the subject) only is invested with this character. The latter opinion is held by Bellarmine, and the Jesuits generally, but is not confined to them. Eusebius, according to Montfaucon, held the first of these opinions. The views of the bishop of Cæsarea are then examined touching the intercession of Saints, Grace and Freewill, and the Real Presence, on all of which he is declared orthodox. Next comes the relation of Eusebius to the great Arian-controversy. The conclusion arrived at by Montfaucon, after an elaborate enquiry, is that Eusebius was an Arian. (1) Other points are also noted on which the courtly prelate was heterodox, these are the number of natures in Christ, original sin, &c. Two subjects are indicated on which Eusebius has been misapprehended and therefore unjustly suspected. These have reference respectively to a matter of fact and a dogma. The fact is the perpetual virginity of our blessed Lady; the dogma is the Divine institution of Confession. On both, notwithstanding certain ambiguous expressions, Eusebius is shewn to have been perfectly orthodox. The review is continued in the eighth, ninth, and

(1) "The character of Eusebius," says Gibbon, "has always been a pro-blem." Yet Gibbon arrives at the same conclusion as Montfaucon. Decline and Fall, see 21. See also Baron. ad an, 356.

tenth chapters, but the points above referred to constitute all that is likely to interest generally.

The preface to the second volume, which consists of twenty-two chapters, is devoted exclusively to St. Athanasius. Here it is unnecessary to enter into these elaborate details. There is, however, one point which is interesting to all Catholics, I mean the conduct of Pope Liberius, and his relations to Athanasius and the Nicene faith. Was Liberius a heretic? That is precisely the question. On this subject, it is somewhat strange to find the Centuriators of Magdeburg more indulgent to the memory of a Roman Pontiff, than the Catholic Bishop of Meaux. The 20th chapter of the work now under consideration constitutes, a splendid defence of the orthodoxy of Liberius. (1)

Towards the close of the Preface, the opinions of Marcellus of Ancyra are examined. The long friendship of Athanasius has not saved the memory of Marcellus from the imputation of heresy. Montfaucon summons him to the bar of historical criticism, carefully weighs the accusations against him and solemnly acquits him. (2)

Montfaucon's next work was his, "*Palæographia Græca*," which appeared, in 1708, and forms a valuable text-book on the origin and progress of Greek literature, the history of Greek MSS. Diplomas, &c., &c.

(1) Athanasius eum (Liberium) constantem certe in professione fidei Nicenæ mansisse indicat. Centur. Ecc. Hist. per aliq. studiosos et pios viros in urbe Magdeburgensi, &c., 1562, Cent. IV. c. x.

See also the learned and exhaustive treatise of Fr. Stilting; "*Commentarius Critico—Historicus*," which fills 60 folio pages of the *Acta Sanctorum*, (23 Septemb.); the Abbé Corgnes's, "*Dissertation Critique et Historique*," Henrion, Hist. Ecc. t. 1. Butler's "*Lives of the Saints*," (2 May) Life of St. Athanasius, note; Baronius ad an 357 candidly admits that the conduct of the Pontiff, though free from the taint of heresy, was strangely wanting in prudence. Mansi (Conc) says, even though Liberius had signed the documents on which the charge against him is founded, yet, "*non definivit ex cathedrâ, non docuit*" "*tanquam omnium fidelium magister ac doctor*," &c. De Maistre "*Du Pape*" treats the subject well, but briefly; Bossuet, at a later period of his life, modified his views on this subject.

(2) Not so Petavius, who (as Gibbon says) "*reluctantly condemns him*." Petav. Dogm. Theol. t. ii. Ll. c. 14. Marcellus seems to have been absolved by Julius I. See Doellinger, Hist. of the Church, vol. ii.

"It possesses," says Tassin, "all the importance, as regards Greek, of Mabillon's 'Diplomatica' concerning Latin literary history. Thus two new sciences have been created, Latin and Greek Palæography, each, as it were the complement of the other, and each still appealed to by the learned, as the highest authority on the subject to which it refers." (1)

In 1713, appeared Montfaucon's edition of the "Hexapla" of Origen, in two folio volumes. We shall form some idea of the immense labour which this cost him, when we learn that he spent three and twenty years in preparing it for the press. As Origen is one of the greatest men named in ecclesiastical history, and as his edition of the Scriptures, known as the "Hexapla," has its importance attested by the fact that, in the Vulgate, it has largely passed into the "authorized" version of the Catholic Church, it may not be amiss to say a word here, first, as to the man; second, as to the work.

Origen was born towards the close of the second century. His father, Leonides, martyred in the persecution of Severus, in 202, bequeathed to him an honored name and a glorious example, which the youthful Origen was with difficulty restrained from imitating.

He was then scarcely seventeen years of age, yet the letter which, on that memorable occasion, he addressed to his father, to encourage him to persevere in the faith, is, in every sense, worthy of his immortal name. (2) Deprived of a parent's care by the axe of the executioner, and of his parent's property by the cruel laws of the empire, Origen had need of all his vast resources, his boundless energy, his fearless will,

(1) Eusebius has only preserved a fragment of this letter in his Ecclesiastical History, L. 6., c. ii.; but it is worth volumes as Tillemont remarks. *Mém. t. iii.*

(2) Tassin, *Hist. Lit. de la Cong. de S. Maur.*

to enable him to look the future steadily in the face. At first he was aided by the generosity of a rich Alexandrian lady, who was interested in his fate, but he was soon able to dispense with this help. He had received from his father an excellent education, which he now perfected himself. (1) He studied polite literature with great success, and soon opened a school at Alexandria, which was destined to become famous. Alexandria, after the fall of Athens, had become the intellectual capital of Greece, and the vanity of Origen (had he been disposed to indulge it) might have been flattered by the thought that among his audience he reckoned the élite of paganism and Christianity. His eminence, even in the profane sciences, is attested on indisputable authority; (2) and the Empress Mammæa was fascinated by his eloquence, and convinced by his magnificent pleading for the Christian faith. (3)

It was about this period that Origen, in an access of mistaken zeal, adopted that singular mode of delivering himself from temptations of the flesh which is equally opposed to human and divine law and which he himself afterwards so bitterly regretted. It has often been urged, and with considerable truth, that his commentaries on Scripture are too figurative and allegorical. But, in the instance now referred to, the charge against him is that his interpretation (of Matthew, XIX. 12) is, at once, too literal and too violent. (4)

Origen is said to have written no fewer than 6,000 volumes, on various subjects, but his fame rests chiefly on his Biblical

(1) Origen also attended the lectures of Clement of Alexandria, who thus became the illustrious master of a still more illustrious pupil.

(2) That of Porphyry, the celebrated Neo-Platonic philosopher, apud. Euseb. L. vi. C. 19.

(3) Hieron, *De Virris illust.* C. 54; Euseb. *Loc. cit.*

(4) This singular incident is mentioned by Eusebius L.VI. 8 and by St. Jerome. Ep. 65. The Roman law was opposed to it. See Suet. in vit. Domit. Justin. Mart. Apol. ii., p. 71, and the Canon Law, as declared at the Council of Nice, &c. But this was posterior to Origen's time, and it is doubtful whether the Church had then declared herself on the subject. See Tillemont, t. III.

criticisms and his splendid Apology for Christianity, in which, as Eusebius remarks, is to be found everything that has been said or that ever shall be said on this momentous question. The fate of Origen was remarkable in this, that no man was ever more thoroughly beloved by his friends, nor more cordially hated by his enemies. Truth, as usual, lies between these extremes. Origen deservedly ranks among the greatest, but the greatest are only men, subject to all the disturbing influences of this "muddy vesture of decay." "If any Judas," says St. Jerome, "envious of his glory, come to object to us his errors, let him know that even the greatest men have had their faults. Many others, both Greeks and Latins, have fallen into errors against the faith.

"Let us not imitate his faults, but let us candidly admit that we are incapable of imitating his virtues." (1)

Similar opinions have been expressed by other writers eminent for sanctity or learning, or for both together. Such are Saints Basil, Athanasius; the three Gregories, viz., of Nysa, Thaumaturgus and Nazianzum; Pamphilus, Vincent, of Lerins. (2) Two of these Saints have composed panegyrics of Origen, viz., St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, and St. Pamphilus. That of St. Gregory is one of the best portraits we have of Origen.

Conspicuous among his modern admirers are the pious and learned Tillemont and the distinguished German Savant, Mæhler. Speaking of the fall of Origen, the former says: "By so striking an example, Almighty God has been pleased to warn us that he who attempts to grapple, by unaided reason, with subjects which are placed infinitely above the reach of all human reason, cannot escape a certain fall. Happy such

(1) Hier. Ep. 65.

(2) St. Vincent, who was far from being an indiscriminate admirer of Origen's, uses rather bold language in speaking of this eminent man; "I would rather," says the Saint, "be wrong with Origen than right with others!" *Commonitorium*, C. xvii.



“an one, if God still holds him by the hand, as *He did Origen*,  
 “in order to prevent him from rolling to the bottom of the  
 “precipice. To err is one thing, to be a heretic is quite  
 “another. . . . As regards his salvation, it is a matter  
 “which had better be left to the impenetrable judgments of  
 “God. One thing is certain, the pretended visions of those,  
 “who imagined that they had seen him among the damned,  
 “will never send him to hell.

“We have even strong grounds for hoping that God will  
 “not close the gates of Heaven against the man who so loved  
 “poverty and who appears to have been truly poor in spirit.”

(1) The charity which caused him to labour with so much  
 zeal and success for the conversion of sinners, must doubtless  
 have saved his own soul from death, and covered a great  
 number of faults which seem to have been the off-spring rather  
 of the head than of the heart.

“He was never ashamed of the Gospel. He confessed Jesus  
 “Christ before men, by word, work, example and suffering.  
 “Why then may we not hope that Jesus Christ will, in turn,  
 “confess him before His Angels and His Father?” (2)

There are probably few readers who will not re-echo these  
 charitable sentiments of the Solitary of Port Royal in favour  
 of the man who would have saved even the Devil himself. (3)

(1) The allusion here is evidently to Matthew, v. 2.

(2) Tillemont, *Memoires*, t. III.

(3) This was one of Origen's errors, a fault surely that “leant to virtue's side.”  
 It was an “excess of charity,” if such a phrase be not a contradiction in terms,  
 as Lord Bacon seems to think. (See a beautiful passage in his “*Essays*.”  
 “The desire of power in excess caused the Angels to fall; of knowledge in  
 excess caused man to fall; but in love *there is no excess*, and neither angel  
 nor man can, &c.” I have not the volume by me, but I hope I have saved my  
 Bacon). Pope St. Gregory the Great is said to have rescued a damned soul out  
 of Hell (that of the Emperor Trajan) and the possibility of his having done so  
 is gravely discussed by his biographers, John and Paul, the Deacons; by John  
 of Salisbury (from whom Dante has taken the account given in *Purgat. C. X.*)  
 by St. Thomas (4 distinct 45 quæst, 2, art. 5 *ad quintum et aliter*); by Baronius  
 (an 604) by Bellarmine, &c. Another unsound opinion of Origen's was the  
 in one of the pre-existence of souls, a subject which has been also handled  
 justine. On these and other points it is enough for us to know that  
 of Origen has never been formally condemned by the Church.

I shall terminate these testimonies in favour of Origen by an extract from the works of one of Germany's most learned sons. "We do not know anyone who, to such brilliant gifts of mind, joins such untiring zeal, and who employed them in a nobler manner than Origen. His industry, his fearless courage, in the midst of dangers, his unshakable will, his patience and submission, under trials which he had not deserved, his charity, his humility, his lowly opinion of himself, at the very time that others extolled him to the stars; his ardent love of Jesus Christ and His Church; his zeal for the salvation of souls, have all rendered him an object of the highest interest. Under these various aspects, the history of the Church presents us with no other name that can, for a moment, be compared to that of Origen." (1)

I have dwelt thus long, but I hope not too long, on the character of this illustrious man. "To be just towards great men," says Guizot, "we must understand them well, and to understand them, we must look at them from various points of view, for they present us with a thousand different aspects." (2)

So much as to the man. Now as to the work, which connects his name with that of Montfaucon,—viz., the "Hexapla." By this term is understood the publication, by Origen, in a collective form, of six ancient Greek versions of the Old Testament, and the collation of them with the original Hebrew. These versions are published in six parallel columns, and hence the name Hexapla, signifying, in Greek, six columns. For a similar reason it is sometimes styled Octapla (a work of eight columns), because, in addition to the Greek versions, was also given the Hebrew original in two forms,—viz., Hebrew words in Hebrew characters,

(1) Mœhler, *Patrolog*, tom. 2.

(2) Civilis, in France, *Leçon 14me*.

and Hebrew words in Greek characters. The reader, on opening the book, therefore found at a glance, the same subject reproduced as it were in eight different manners.

The object of the work was not (as some suppose) to correct or supersede the version known as the Septuagint, for which he entertained the profoundest veneration, but, on the contrary, to vindicate it against the unjust attacks of the Jews. The Septuagint was then the principal version in use among Christians, in whose eyes it was invested with a most sacred character, from the fact that it had been consecrated by the usage of Christ and his apostles. The Jews perceived its importance, and therefore, in their controversies with the Christians, they lost no opportunity of depreciating its authority. They denounced it as utterly unreliable, and laid great emphasis on a passage in the History of Suzanna, as given by Daniel, where the point is made to depend on a *jeu de mots* perfectly intelligible in Greek, but meaningless in Hebrew. Hence, said they, a clear case of falsification. Many discrepancies doubtless existed between the Hebrew and the Septuagint, but they were not such as to justify the sweeping charges of the Jews.

To reply to these charges, and effectually silence those cavils, Origen compiled his famous Hexapla, which represents the fruits of nearly thirty years of continuous toil.

There were then in existence, as already stated, six different Greek versions of the Old Testament. These were—first, that known as the Septuagint; second, that of Aquila; third, that of Symmachus; fourth, that of Theodotion; and fifth and sixth, two anonymous versions. All of these appeared in the Hexapla. A word in turn on each. First, alike in time and importance, comes the Septuagint. The history of its origin appears to be this: King Ptolemy Philadelphus being desirous of increasing the treasures of

the famous Alexandrian Library, and having heard much of the Sacred Books of the Law of the Jews, wished to add them also to his great collection. With this view he despatched certain ambassadors to Jerusalem, with a request addressed to the High Priest, Eleazar, that he would send into Egypt certain "learned clerks," familiar with the Hebrew and Greek tongues, in order that they may translate the Books of the Law, from the former, into the latter language. Ptolemy was wise in his generation, and therefore he furnished his ambassadors with arguments which are supposed to be very convincing to man's mind in general, and to the Jewish mind in particular. These arguments were supplied by the Egyptian treasury, and proved remarkably successful. The head, or, rather, the heart of Eleazar was touched, and, for the first time in the history of his race, a Jew consented to lift the veil that hid the awful name of Jehovah from the profane gaze of the Gentile world. Seventy interpreters were sent into Egypt at the request of, and for the purpose indicated by, Ptolemy, and it is to their labours that we are indebted for the most ancient and most important version of the Old Testament that we possess, the Hebrew alone excepted. This celebrated event occurred about 280 years before Christ. (1)

The fathers of the Church, Clement of Alexandria (Strom. L. 1), Justin Martyr (*Exhortatio ad Gracos*), Cyril of Jeru-

(1) Usher says 277; *Annales Vet et Nov. Test.* The number of the translators (70, in Latin *Septuaginta*) explains the origin of the title "Septuagint," if, indeed, there were only 70, which seems doubtful. The authorities, viz., Aristæus, Aristobulus, Josephus, Philo, Justin Martyr, and Epiphanius, are hopelessly conflicting as regards the details of this matter. The critics have employed—not to say wasted—much learned labour in trying to reconcile them. But one may (*pace tantorum virorum*) be excused for not feeling a very profound interest in the solution of such questions as whether the interpreters were 70 or 72, whether they performed their labours on an island or the mainland, whether they worked singly or in batches, &c., &c. The really important fact is that at or about this time the famous translation called the Septuagint was made. The rest is all pure conjecture, and besides, *de lanâ caprinâ rixatur*. "The credulous prolixity of Aristæus and others," says Dupin, "merely moved the laughter of St. Jerome."

salem (Catechesis 4), Irenæus (contra Hæreticos L. 3), Epiphanius (De Ponderibus et Mensuris), Chrysostom (Hom. 4 in Genes), Augustin (De Doctrina Christiana, c. xv., and De Civ. Dei., L. 18, c. 43), &c., all vie with each other in extolling the Septuagint. Some have even gone so far as to say that the seventy interpreters were inspired, an opinion, however, which is not shared by St. Jerome. The Septuagint is a translation, and, as such, its value must be tested by its fidelity to the original, like any other translation.

It was at first greatly esteemed by the Jews, who caused it to be read in their synagogues, became the basis of the older vulgate, was generally quoted by the Fathers, is still read in the Greek Church, and, through the Vulgate of St. Jerome, has been received, in part at least, into the bosom of the Catholic Church. But what has probably invested this version with its most important character is the fact that it was so often quoted by Christ and his apostles.

The New Testament contains about 350 quotations from the Old, and of these fully 300 are from the Septuagint.

Yet it must be admitted that their mode of quoting was peculiar, and their citations, when confronted with the seventy, will not (as Dr. Doellinger observes) bear the test of a critical examination. (1) Of all the New Testament writers, St. Paul is the one whose quotations from the Septuagint are least accurate. Sometimes he appears to quote from memory, sometimes he translates himself directly from the Hebrew, and sometimes entirely misquotes. (2)

This is the more remarkable, as St. Paul was the most learned of the sacred penmen, and one from whom, humanly speaking, the greatest accuracy might have been expected.

(1) "The First Age of Christianity." Vol. I.

(2) Of this there is a remarkable instance in Heb. x. 5-7, where the discrepancy between the quotation and the seventy is so great, that grave doubts were once entertained as to the canonicity of this epistle, as Jerome tells us, Ad. Js. vii. 9. Another instance is in Eph. iv. 8.

The Septuagint had also an importance of another kind ; it constituted a kind of rapprochement between the intellect of Judea and that of Greece, each in its way, the then depository of all that was most sublime in the science of God and of nature. The minds of the peoples of these two remarkable countries, so long strangers to each other; now became, as it were, interpenetrated. The "two testaments") as Clement of Alexandria happily says), the torch of revelation and the lamp of learning, the one granted to the Jews, the other to the Greeks, were now face to face. (1)

Originally the translation was well received by the Jews, but after a time two schools of opinion sprang up among them on the subject. These were the Hebraizing and Grecizing parties ; the former representing the straight-laced maxims of the Synagogue ; the latter having the exuberance of their

(1) Strom. L. v., c. 5. This eminent writer was the first to maintain that Plato, whom he styles the "Greek Moses," was acquainted with the doctrine of the Trinity, and other revealed truths. He supposes Plato to have read an early Greek version of the Scriptures, but there is no trace of any such version before that of the seventy. St. Augustin is of opinion that Plato might have acquired his knowledge of those truths from the prophet Jeremias, but Jeremias lived 100 years before Plato, and the Septuagint was not published till sixty years after Plato's death. Besides these eminent writers, the following also held that Plato was acquainted with the doctrine of the Trinity, viz.: Justin, Martyr; Apol. ii. 5; Eusebius, Præp. Ev. xi. 20; Theodoret, Therap. i. 2. In modern times, this opinion has been held by Chateaubriand, "Génie du Christianisme," Livre 1er.; and Cardinal Wiseman, "Lectures on Science and Religion."

It seems a bold thing to say, that so many eminent men were mistaken, yet such is the conclusion to which the researches of the best scholars now inevitably point. "We think," says M. Jules Simon, "that the dogma of the Trinity is not in Plato, and that the Trinity of Plotinus has merely certain verbal analogies with the Christian Trinity." (Hist. de l'Ecole d'Alexandrie, t. I.) Another distinguished writer, who has made the matter the subject of a special study, expresses himself to the same effect. I allude to Dr. Doellinger, who in his book on the "Gentile and the Jew," (Heidenthum und Judenthum), has completely dissipated all possible doubt on the point. Plato appears to have had some faint glimmering of the truth, but a gulf wide as the world separates him from the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity. And had he known the dogma, it is not easy to see what sanction even his authority could give to a mystery whose nature is entirely beyond the grasp of the highest human reason. The passages in Plato which are relied on as proving that he held the doctrine of the Trinity, are Timæus, c. 37; De Rep. L. vi., and the obscure (some say intentionally so), sentence in the second Platonic letter. But Plato's ignorance on this point does not prevent him from ranking as one of the greatest of moral philosophers. See Doellinger, ubi sup. t. i.

zeal sensibly toned down by intercourse with the refined and subtle spirit of the Greeks. In the eyes of the Hebraizing Jews, the Septuagint was an abomination the like of which had never been seen in Israel, since the fatal days when, in Dan and Bethel, amid the blaze of lights and the smoke of incense, the impious Jeroboam had dared to outrage the majesty of the house of David, by bending before the senseless forms of the golden calves. (1)

By the Grecizing Jews, on the other hand, the labours of the Seventy were hailed with every mark of interest and respect. Here then were to be found the germs of a respectable quarrel, which went on increasing in intensity, from age to age, until, at last, the state was compelled to interpose its strong arm, in order to prevent the odium theologicum from finding expression in that very *striking* mode of producing conviction, the argumentum baculinum. (2) After this act of enforced toleration, each party was at liberty to pray to God, in Hebrew or Greek, at discretion.

Such is, in brief, the history of this famous version.

(1) III Kings, xii. 28 and seq. See also Calmet, "Dict. de la Bible," Art "Septante;" and Dr. Dixon's learned "Introduction to the study of the Sacred Scriptures," vol. I. Dupin's preliminary Dissertation, prefixed to his "Bibliothèque," &c., may be read with advantage.

The name of Jeroboam appears to have been as full of bitter memories to the Jews as that of Pharsalia to the Romans.

"Tempora signavit leviorum Roma malorum,  
Hunc voluit nesciri diem." (Lucan.)

The zeal of the Jews for the Hebrew was the more remarkable because, at that time, not one in 50,000 of them understood a single word of Hebrew, which became a dead language after the Babylonian captivity. After that, the Pentateuch, to be intelligible, had to be translated into Chaldaic.

(2) See a Decree of the Emperor Justinian, Nov. 146, this decree was published about A.D. 550.

Before passing from the subject of the LXX. I may allude to one remarkable point of discrepancy between it and the Hebrew. The chronologies of these celebrated versions differ, in some cases, (according to Ussher, Annal. Vet. et Nov. Test.) by several thousands of years!! St Jerome has followed the Hebrew chronology in the Vulgate. The Church, notwithstanding her solemn approval of the Vulgate, does not appear to have committed herself finally to either chronology, for while she admits the Hebrew, in the Vulgate, she adopts the LXX chronology in the Martyrology. See Bossuet, Hist. Univ. Partie, Ire. Epoque, 12me.

I now pass to the second Greek version, viz. that of Aquila, Aquila was a man of varied learning, and still more varied opinions; one who was "everything by fits and nothing long." He was successively a Pagan, a Christian, a Jew, and, for ought we know, may have run the whole round of the then existing religious systems. That he was an able man is quite certain: equally certain would it seem to be that he was the only eminent man of whom it is recorded that he exchanged the substance of the Christian for the shadows of the Mosaic Dispensation.

He appears to have made two translations of the Hebrew Scripture, each the very antipodes of the other; for while one was totally wanting in accuracy, the other, from its extremely literal character, was barbarous and frequently obscure. It is the latter version that Origen selected for his "Hexapla," and notwithstanding the defects just mentioned, it has been highly esteemed both by Jews and Christians.. (1)

If Aquila's version were marked by obscurity, that of Symmachus, written in the purest Greek, is justly admired for the beauty and clearness of its style.

It is praised by St. Jerome, and is the one, after the Septuagint, which Montfaucon esteemed the most. (2)

Next comes the version of Theodotion, which is said to exhibit a greater approximation to the Septuagint than either of the other two. The Church has shewn her sense of the value of his labours by receiving his translation of the Book of Daniel, in preference to that contained in any of the others. (3) He has, however, been severely handled by

(1) On Aquila's version, see Orig. Ep. ad Afric: Hieron, in Ezech: Aug. De Civ. Dei. L. xv. C. 25. Oudin, De Script. Eccles, t. 1, in vit. Orig. Tillemont, Mem. t. iii; Huet, Origeniana, &c., &c.

(2) Hieron, in Eccl. vii: Montfaucon, Diss., in Hexap.

(3) Epiph. De Pond et Mens. C. xviii: Hieron. Præf. in Dan.



modern critics (1) After these versions, come two anonymous ones.

Both were accidentally discovered, and both are equally "free," being, in fact, rather paraphrases than translations. In the absence of any author's name by which to distinguish them, these "free" versions, have been freely designated the seventh and eighth respectively. It is uncertain whether the author of the seventh was a Jew, a Samaritan, or a Christian; as regards the eighth, it is inferred, with some probability, that its author was a Christian, from the fact that the Redeemer's name is found in a certain page of the prophet Habacuc.

Such were the constituent elements of Origen's famous "Hexapla." The order in which the different versions were given was as follows:—First, appeared the Hebrew text, in Hebrew characters; second, the same in Greek characters; third, Aquila's version, as being the closest approximation to the Hebrew; fourth, that of Symmachus; fifth, the Septuagint; sixth, that of Theodotion; (the LXX was placed designedly between the versions of Symmachus and Theodotion, as occupying the mean between the somewhat free translation of the former and the more literal one of the latter;) seventh and eighth, came the anonymous versions, designated respectively by these numbers. In some editions of the Hexapla, was to be found another anonymous version styled the ninth, and containing only the Psalms. In this case, the work was more correctly designated the Enneapla, that is a nine column work.

It no longer exists in its integrity, having been destroyed, it is said, by the Arabs, in one of their marauding inroads into Palestine. It was, however, extant in St. Jerome's time, (about 388) who tells us that he saw a copy of it in the

(1) Oudin (loc. cit.) accuses him of ignorance and says he was entirely below the grandeur of his task.

library of Cæsarea. (1) Not only that, but he has extensively availed himself of the advantages which it offered him, in preparing his own version of the Old Testament, the Vulgate exhibiting (as Montfaucon observes) a réunion of all the best qualities of the various versions of the Hexapla. It is not necessary here to say much in praise of a work which has been esteemed even by those who could esteem nothing else that this illustrious man has done. (2) Judged by the French maxim—there is nothing that succeeds like success—we should be disposed to form a very high estimate of its value. In the Hexapla, Origen proposed to himself to vindicate the authority of the Septuagint against the cavils of the Hebraizing Jews, and, in this, he has, (according to the most competent of critics) triumphantly succeeded. (3)

Montfaucon's edition of this famous work has been justly esteemed by the learned. (4) As already stated, the Hexapla, in its integrity, had unfortunately perished, but enough still remained to afford us an opportunity of appreciating the value of Origen's vast labours. A valuable Dissertation is prefixed by Montfaucon, in which he enters minutely into the history of each version, examining when, where and by whom it was written.

(1) Hieron, Com. in Ep. Ad Tit, C. 3 ; De Viris illust, C. 54.

(2) Of this number is St. Epiphanius, one of Origen's most determined opponents. Yet the Saint says it was a valuable work, but qualifies his praise by adding that it was the "only useful thing that Origen had done." Epiph. De Pond. et Mens, C. 2.

(3) St. Jerome says that Origen's defence of the LXX was complete and in every respect "*worthy of his immortal genius*." Ad Tit. loc. cit. Hæc immortale illud ingenium, suo nobis labore, donavit. He adds that the Jews can no longer wag their heads, nor run out their tongues at the Christians!!

See also Ambros. Ps. C. xviii. v. 21. Fabricius, Bibliotheca Græca, Dupin, t. 1 ; Tillemont, t. iii, &c. Il est sûr, says Bossuet, que l'ancienne Eglise Latine n'a jamais eu de père plus savant que St. Jérôme, ni de meilleur interprète de la Sainte Ecriture. Projet de réunion entre les Catholiques et les Protestants.

(4) See Dupin, Oudin, Dr. Dixon (loc. cit) &c. The testimony of Oudin is the more important because when his work "De Scripturibus Ecclesiæ," was written, he had unhappily lost the faith. But the change of religion did not impair the strength of his admiration for Montfaucon, "Bernardus noster," as he styles the learned Benedictine. An interesting specimen of the Hexapla is given in vol. VII. of St. Jerome's works, Com. in Ep. ad. Tit., ed Migne.

As we have already glanced at these points, it will be unnecessary to say more now on the subject. He agrees with St. Jerome, and many other ancient writers, in thinking that the seventy interpreters translated the Pentateuch only. This for two reasons, first because the translation of the Pentateuch is more exact, more faithful, than that of the other books; secondly, because there is a marked difference of style, which unmistakeably shews that the translation of the five books of Moses was the work of very different hands from those that have given us the remaining books of the Old Testament.

He concludes his dissertation by an elaborate and appreciative criticism of the Vulgate.

The work has appended to it two most useful Lexicons, for the benefit of Biblical students, one Hebrew, the other Greek, both having special reference to the "Hexapla."

It is to be noted, however, that the Greek Lexicon does not give the terms peculiar to the Septuagint, but only those of the other versions, and this, most probably, because a Lexicon of the Septuagint had already been published by Kirkerus.

The whole appeared, at Paris, in 1713, in two folio volumes.

About the same period, Montfaucon published a translation of Philo's work "*De Vita Contemplativa*." The interest of this book turns chiefly on the question whether the Therapeutæ (described by Philo) were Christians or Jews. On this point, two schools of opinion have existed, the greatest names have been marshalled on either side, and oceans of ink have been spilt. On the one hand, are Eusebius, Sozomen, St. Jerome, Cassian, Baronius, Bellarmine, &c.; on the other, are Cotelier, Henri de Valois, Scaliger, Saumaise, Grotius, Basnage, Pagi, &c. The former advocated the "Christian," the latter, the "Jewish" theory as to the Therapeutæ. Cal-

met sums up the arguments, on both sides, but (with judicial reserve) sides with neither. Montfaucon goes in for the Christian theory. Gibbon, "our only ecclesiastical historian" (1) has a characteristic passage on the subject. "The philosophic eye of Pliny," says the great historian, "had surveyed, with astonishment, a solitary people who dwelt among the palm trees, near the Dead Sea, who subsisted without money, who were propagated without women, and who derived, from the disgust and repentance of mankind, a perpetual supply of voluntary associates." (2)

The question no longer excites the same interest, and since the learned labours of Dr. Doellinger have been given to the public, the subject may be said to be finally closed. (3)

In 1719 appeared the first volumes of Montfaucon's great work, "*L'Antiquité Expliquée*," which were speedily followed by the remaining volumes.

This work created quite a furore in the literary world. "Everyone," says Tassin, "even the ignorant, would read it, and in the brief space of two months the first edition, in ten folio volumes and consisting of 1800 copies was exhausted." This fact speaks more eloquently than any criticism. The work is in Latin (for the learned of various countries) and in French (for popular use) and is, as its title implies, an explanation of antiquity, chiefly Pagan antiquity. The Gods, temples, altars, sacrifices, the military uniforms and weapons, &c. of the ancients are here minutely described, and the subject is further illustrated by thousands of valuable plates, fac-similes, &c.

(1) Dr. Newman thus describes him: "Development of Christian Doctrine."

(2) The following are Pliny's words, which Gibbon has slightly coloured with the hue of his own peculiar opinions. "Gens sola et in toto orbe, præter ceteras mira, sine ulla femina, omni venere abdicatâ, sine pecunia, socia palmarum! Ita per sæculorum millia (incredibile dictu!) gens æterna est in qua nemo nascitur. Tam fecunda illis aliorum vitæ penitentia est." Hist. Nat. L.V.C. 15.

(3) See "The Gentile and the Jew," vol. 2nd, where it is clearly shewn that both the Therapeutæ and the Essenes were Jews and not Christians. A view of the opposite side of the question will be found in Helyot (Hist. des ordres monast. I.) who quotes the opinions of various writers. from Eusebius to Montfaucon.

As it now stands, the book fills fifteen folio volumes, and seems an undertaking, says Chalmers, more suited to the opportunities of some learned academy, than to the limited powers of any single individual.

At the commencement of the 18th century, when this work appeared, it was unrivalled alike for its learning and extent. Since that period, great strides have been made in the attainment of a knowledge of antiquity. Niebuhr, Champollion, and others have appeared, and by the aid of a criticism at once ingenious and profound, have compelled the past to deliver up its secrets. At present, therefore, we tread the labyrinth of by-gone ages, with a firmer step and a clearer glance.

This, however, does not detract from the value of Montfaucon's work, which presents us with all the results attainable in his time; and, notwithstanding the advances since made, no book has yet appeared which *completely* supersedes Montfaucon's labours. (1) "L'Antiquité expliquée" therefore still remains a colossal monument of untiring industry and boundless erudition.

The publication of this work obtained for its author the general esteem of the learned and the smiles and favours of the great. The Duke of Orleans, to mark his sense of Montfaucon's labours, caused him to be enrolled as an extraordinary member of the "Academy of Inscriptions," of which learned body he soon became an active and distinguished member. (2)

But neither the applause of the learned nor the smiles of the great could divert Montfaucon from his literary labours. About the period at which we are now arrived, another work appeared which is generally considered a chef-d'œuvre of Benedictine learning. This was his edition of the works of

(1) This is the opinion of the great bibliographer, Brunet, "Manuel du Libraire."

(2) Montfaucon contributed to the proceedings of the Academy several valuable papers of a critico-historical kind, which will be found in the History of the Academy.

St. Chrysostom, in thirteen folio volumes. Each volume is enriched with notes and a preface, in which every fact of importance is pointed out, every difficulty explained, and everything is treated in such a manner as the most judicious criticism could require.

This edition represents the fruit of thirteen years of learned labour, including the collation of over three hundred MSS. of the Saint's works.

His last work of note, was his "*Bibliotheca Bibliothecarum Manuscriptorum Nova*," an account of the manuscripts in the principal libraries of Europe. This appeared in 1739, and is esteemed a valuable manual on the subject to which it refers.

We have thus glanced successively at Montfaucon's various works, and endeavoured to estimate their importance.

His life was singularly calm and uneventful, and is to be found chiefly in his books which are, at once, his history and his glory. "In an extreme old age," says Tassin, "he devoted eight hours a day to study. His constitution had been so strengthened, by a moderate and regular life, that during fifty years, he had never known a moment's sickness. Two days before his death, he communicated to the Academy the plan of a series of his '*Monuments of the French Monarchy*,' which he intended to publish in three volumes. After that, he proposed to publish a new edition of the Greek Dictionary of *Æmilius Portus*, with considerable additions.

"Such were his projects, on the 19th December, 1741, on the 21st of the same month, he had ceased to exist." (1)

Thus passed away the illustrious savant, as it were, in harness, pen in hand, with all his "blushing honors thick upon him:" thus did he whose skilful hands so often

(1) Hist. Litt. de la Cong. de St. Maur.

unfolded the story of the past, now have the "story of his  
"days shut up in the dark and silent grave."

Even such is Time, that takes on trust  
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,  
And pays us but with age and dust ;  
Who, in the dark and silent grave,  
When we have wandered all our ways,  
Shuts up the story of our days !  
But, from this earth, this grave, this dust,  
My God shall raise me up, I trust !

"Montfaucon," says a distinguished critic, "has obtained  
"a glorious place in the Republic of Letters, by his learning  
"and penetration, the purity of his taste, the accuracy of his  
"discernment, the soundness of his criticism, his great know-  
"ledge of languages, his aptitude for acquiring a complete  
"acquaintance with all the details of sacred and profane  
"antiquity, and the vast extent and variety of his erudition  
"which causes him to be justly regarded as one of the most  
"learned men of his age." (1)

Enough perhaps has been said to enable most readers to  
form an estimate of Montfaucon. Nevertheless, for the  
benefit of those who may desire to know still more of the  
man and his works, I here subjoin a list of authorities, all  
of whom speak in highly appreciative terms of Montfaucon.

Dupin ; *Bibliothèque des auteurs ecclésiastiques, du  
XVII<sup>e</sup>me. Siècle* : Moreri, *Dictionnaire Historique* : Tassin and  
Le Cerf (the works of each just quoted) : Fabricius, *Biblio-  
theca Græca* : the *Eloge de Montfaucon*, in the 16th tome  
of the *History of the Academy of Inscriptions, &c., &c.*

(1) Le Cerf "*Bibliothèque Historique et Critique de la Congregation de St.  
Maur.*"

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## JOHN LUKE D'ACHERY.

JOHN LUKE D'ACHERY was born at St. Quentin, in 1609, and, at an early period, joined the Benedictine order, in his native town.

It would appear as if the monks of St. Quentin did not fully realise his ideal of the religious life, and we therefore find that in October, 1632, he left them to enter the monastery of the Holy Trinity, at Vendôme, which was affiliated to the Congregation of St. Maur. The change, however advantageous it may have proved to his soul, was almost fatal to his body. He was on this account advised to try the air of St. Germain des Prés, at Paris, and thither he accordingly went, some time in 1633. This venerable abbey became his home for the rest of his days, and the scene of his pious and learned labours.

Though his constitution was of the weakest, and though his life was little better than one long malady, (1) yet no man ever more completely devoted himself to the duties of his profession than D'Achery. "Having," says Dupin, "left the world, not only in body, but in mind and affection, he applied himself entirely to exercises of piety and to study, to which, next to Fr. Menard, he gave the greatest impulse in the Benedictine order. In both he made such progress that he was equally esteemed by the pious and the learned. Many distinguished for devotion placed themselves under his guidance, while many savants deemed it an honour to visit and consult him. He laboured zealously for the sanctification of the former, while the latter derived great benefit, as well from his counsels as from the manuscripts which he liberally lent them." (2)

The history of his life is soon told.

(1) If Martial be an authority such a life is no life at all. "Non est vivere, sed valere, vita." Epigram et Martianum, vi., 70.

(2) Bibliothèque des auteurs ecclésiastiques du xvii.<sup>me</sup> siècle.



Soon after his arrival at St. Germain des Prés, he was appointed librarian of the abbey, an office for which he was clearly the right man in the right place.

In this capacity, he rendered important services to his community. Order, "Heaven's first law," reigned under his rule at St. Germain. He prepared a valuable catalogue of the books, brought to light many precious manuscripts, and contributed to the contents of the library a large number of books, collected, with great care, by himself. To this laborious work he devoted all the time which was not assigned to his pious exercises and literary occupations. His attention seems to have been specially devoted to the history of the primitive and middle ages of the Church. "His whole life," says Nicéron, "was one of retirement; he scarcely ever went beyond the abbey walls; avoided visits, and all idle conversations; he spoke but rarely, and then with great modesty and reserve." (1)

He corresponded with some eminent men, whose letters to him are still preserved, and he was highly esteemed by the Sovereign Pontiffs, Alexander VII. and Clement X.

Amidst such occupations, his life passed calmly away. His death, which occurred on the 29th of April, 1685, in his 76th year, was as holy as his life had been edifying. (2)

D'Achery was not a man of original genius, but he possessed that which (as Madame De Stael has well observed), ranks next to genius—viz., the faculty of recognising and appreciating it, in others. He was a careful and laborious compiler, a judicious critic, and an accomplished scholar. "He had," says Le Cerf, "a special talent for dis-

(1) *Mém pour servir à l'hist des hommes Illustres*, tom. xxi.

(2) Le Cerf (*Bibliothèque historique*, &c.), says D'Achery died on the 16th of April, 1685, aged 78 years. This, I apprehend, is a mistake. Dupin, Nicéron, Moreri, &c., all give the date and age above mentioned.

“interring old and valuable monuments, and a correct taste, on which the public could implicitly depend. But he sometimes fails to sustain the reader’s attention, and rouse his curiosity. He probably owes his reputation less to his intellectual eminence than to the accident of his having been one of the earliest of the Maurist savants.” (1)

The following are the principal works which are associated with his name :—

In 1645 he published an edition of the “Catholic Epistle,” which has been attributed to St. Barnabas, (2) the friend and fellow labourer of St. Paul. The object of this Epistle, like that of St. Paul’s to the Hebrews, is to protest against the Judaizing tendencies of certain converts to Christianity. At that period, the Church had to contend with two dangers. One arose from the Christians of Jewish origin, who still wished to retain the ceremonies of the Mosaic law ; the other, from the gentile converts who would fain mingle the superstitions of paganism with the truths of the Gospel. The Epistle of St. Barnabas is directed against the former class. The Judaizing Christians are there distinctly told that the law of Moses has served its purpose and passed away, in order to give place to a better and nobler faith. Judaism, says the Saint, was only a vast symbolism of which Christianity has given us the illustration, while rejecting the symbols. The Temple is destroyed, but, in its stead, is erected a living temple in the heart where God shall henceforth dwell. This is the dogmatic side of the Epistle. It has also a moral side, in which the virtues inculcated in the Gospel are recommended in language worthy of the subject. There are two paths, says the Saint, one of light, the other of darkness. Between these each one must choose. The path of light is, “Thou shalt

(1) *Le Cerf*. loc. cit.

(2) *Sancti Barnabæ Epistola Catholica*, grece et latine, cum notis et observationibus Hugonis Menard, Paris, 1645, 4o.

"love thy Creator, thou shalt glorify thy Redeemer, thou shalt be simple of heart and rich in spirit," &c., &c. The path of darkness is, of course, the opposite of all this. "The style of this Epistle," says D'Achery, "is full of Apostolic dignity; the contents are in perfect harmony with the condition of the rising Church, and its meaning is easily grasped by the reader. All considered, it ought to hold the first place after the Apostolic writings."

Of St. Barnabas, the reputed author of this epistle, we know but little. His name is mentioned in the Acts and also in certain epistles of St. Paul (1), with whom he is supposed to have studied under Gamaliel. The Church of Milan venerates his name as that of her Apostle. We neither know when he was born nor when he died, but (assuming him to be the author of the epistle in question) he was alive in the year 70, for he alludes (in ch. 16) to the destruction of the Temple, as an accomplished fact. (2)

I say, assuming him to be the author, because the authenticity of the epistle was and is doubtful. It is, however, attributed to St. Barnabas by Clement of Alexandria, by Origen, by Tertullian, St. Jerome, &c. On the other side, are Eusebius and others among the ancients, and Cotellier and several distinguished writers among the moderns. (3)

(1) See Acts iv. 36; xi. 24; xv. 2 to 39. First Cor. ix. 6. Col. iv. 10.

(2) The Temple was destroyed by the Roman army, under Titus, on the 10th of the month of Ab, which corresponds to our July, A.D. 70. Thus was unmistakeably fulfilled the prophecy of our Lord.

Once before, the Temple had fallen into profane hands, and it is remarkable that the event occurred on precisely the same day—the 10th of Ab. The first fall was under Nabuchodonosor, and lasted 70 years; the second, after an interval of 677 years, occurred under Titus, and will last until the consummation of things. Julian sought to falsify the Gospel prediction by rebuilding the Temple, but we know, on the unexceptionable authority of a pagan historian, how completely and miraculously his plans were baffled. See Josephus, *De Bell. Jud.* L. vi., c. 26, 7; and Ammianus Marcellinus, L. xxiii., c. 1.

(3) See Clem. Alex. *Strom.* II., 6, 7, 15, 18; Orig. *De Princip.* III., 18. Com. in Ep. ad Rom. I., 24; Con. cel. I., 63; Tertul. *De Pudicit.* S. Hieron. Com. in Ezechiel. I am aware that Eusebius is claimed by both parties in this controversy, but after carefully reading the passages in his "*Ecclesiastical History*" which bear on the subject, I should be disposed to place Eusebius on

Notwithstanding these doubts, and though it has never been received as canonical by the Universal Church, the Epistle appears to have been read in some of the Churches of the first and second centuries.

This is partly explained by the veneration in which it was held, and partly by the fact that the Canon of Scripture was not then formed. The Canon of the New Testament was not and could not be formed, at once, because the books of which it is composed were given to the faithful, not simultaneously, but successively, and it was only in the fourth century that the Canon, as we now understand it, was fixed.

The edition of St. Barnabas' Epistle, published by D'Achery, was really prepared by a brother Benedictine, Fr. Menard, who, however, died before giving it to the world.

In this matter, therefore D'Achery, (though he contributed some valuable remarks himself), must be considered as the literary executor of Menard.

It was the first Greco-Latin edition published, and ranks as one of the best. (1)

D'Achery's next undertaking was an edition of the works of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury. No reader of English history needs to be told who or what Lanfranc was. But he was more than Archbishop of Canterbury, and belongs

the negative side. See his History, L. III., c. 25, and L. VI. c. 13—14. Even D'Achery had his doubts. It is remarkable that the Jewish converts, in defiance of the counsels of St. Barnabas, of St. Paul, and of the decision of the Council of Jerusalem, still persisted in their Judaizing tendencies for fully 160 years, as St. Justin (*Dial cum Tryphon*) tells us.

(1) Various other editions have since been published. One was projected in 1643 by Archbishop Usher, but it was destroyed by fire. Among the more approved editions are those of Vossius (Amsterdam, 1646); Cotellier, (Paris, 1672), in his collection of the Apostolic Fathers, of Leclerc, Tellus, Le Moine, Galland, &c. The whole subject is treated at length by the following writers, viz.:—Le Nourry, *Apparatus ad Bibliothecam maximam Patrum*; Callieau, *Introductio ad Sanct. Pat. lectionem*; Hencke, *Com. de Epist. quæ Barnabæ tribuitur*; Fleury, *Hist. Eccles. L. II., 57*; Tillemont, *Mem. t. I*; Ceillier, *Hist. des Auteurs eccles. t. I*: Cave, Oudin, Lardner (*Credibility of the Gospel*); Hefele, &c. The four last are Protestant writers, and deem the epistle authentic.

at once to British, to ecclesiastical, and to literary history. He was also one of the many glories of the Benedictine order. Lanfranc was by birth an Italian, having been born at Pavia, in 1005. In 1042 he entered the Abbey of Bec, where he founded one of the most famous schools of the Middle Ages. His reputation soon attracted to his lectures students from all parts of Europe, and, among them, many who afterwards became famous; of the latter three deserve mention. One became Pope (Alexander 2nd); another became an archbishop, a philosopher, and a saint (Anselm); the third became a heretic (Berenger, or Berengarius, of Tours).

In 1070 Lanfranc was named Archbishop of Canterbury, by the Conqueror, on the deposition of the Saxon prelate Stigand, and soon after received the pallium from the hands of his former pupil, Alexander 2nd, by whom he was most graciously received, on the occasion of his visit to Rome. (1)

As Archbishop he was remarkable for his zeal in reforming abuses, and his loyalty to the Holy See.

He was an eminent theologian, a skilful politician, and a most distinguished writer. His letters alone (as Dr. Gilles remarks), form a most valuable contribution to the historic records of the age, and a mirror in which the condition, social, political, and religious, of England and Europe are faithfully reflected. He died on the 28th of May, 1089.

We have three editions of his works. The first and best is that by D'Achery; the second, which is merely a reprint of the first, is that published by La Bigne, and which forms part of the 18th volume of his *Bibliotheca Patrum*; the third is by Dr. Gilles (Oxford, 1844), who, in his preface, fully admits his obligations to D'Achery.

The most important of Lanfranc's works are his treatise,

(1) See the account of the interview between the pupil and his former master, in Warton's *Angliæ sacra*, t. I. The account of Lanfranc in Lingard is rather meagre, still more so in Hume.

"De Corpore et Sanguine Domini Nostri," and about sixty letters. Of the latter I have already spoken. The former was a reply to the work of Berengarius on the Eucharist, which he appears to have dedicated to Lanfranc. It is a masterly defence of the orthodox doctrine of the Eucharist, and, independently of its polemical, possesses a special historical interest. "The notes of D'Achery," says Dupin, "are judicious and learned." (1) The work is accompanied by a life of Lanfranc, from an old MS. of the Abbey of Bec, and terminates in an appendix containing a life of St. Augustin, Apostle of England, &c., &c.

In 1640 D'Achery published an interesting volume of extracts from the works of the Fathers, on ascetic theology.

In 1651 he published the works of Gilbert or Guibert, Abbot of Nogent Sous Couci. The appendix contains some valuable records.

In 1653, he gave to the public an edition of the rule of Grimalaic, with many valuable notes. This rule was republished in 1662 by the celebrated Lucas Holstenius, in his "Codex Regularum."

D'Achery's next work is that entitled "Veterum aliquot Scriptorum qui in Galliæ bibliothecis maxime Benedictinorum latuerant Spicilegium." This is his best known and greatest work. The modesty of the title is noteworthy. Spicilegium means a "gleaning," and the idea intended to be conveyed is that the author had merely gathered, in the libraries of France, a few facts which had escaped the attention of preceding writers. But his work is no mere gleaning. On the contrary, it is a vast and splendid collection of materials for the ecclesiastical history of the Middle Ages. It

(1) On the life and writings of Lanfranc see Hist. Litter. de la France, t. viii ; Bach, Revue de Rouen ; Hauréau ; La Philosophie Scolastique ; Charma, Notice Biographique, littéraire et philosophique. There is an account of his life in the Acta Sanctorum (Aprilis), though he does not appear to have been canonised.

is in thirteen volumes, quarto, the first of which appeared in 1655, and the last in 1677. To each volume is prefixed an introduction explanatory of its contents. The last contains a valuable index. The work was, however, deficient in order. The magic of method was wanting. This, its only defect, was removed in a later edition, published by La Barre, Paris, 1723, 3 vols, folio.

The only remaining work with which the name of D'Achery is associated is the "*Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*;" the Lives of the Benedictine Saints. To the earlier volumes of the series he contributed largely, but, on this subject, enough has probably been said in the memoir of Mabillon.

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### FRANCIS LAMI.

OF the Benedictines, as of the Jesuits, it has been remarked that while they have given us numbers of historians, archæologists, critics, hagiographers, &c., they have given us no philosophers. The remark appears to be true. I speak of philosophers such as Des Cartes, Malebranche, Gassendi, Leibnitz, and others of the same stamp. The Benedictines, however, have given us, at least, one. (1) This was Father Francis Lami.

On the life and writings of D'Achery, see Dupin, *Bibliothèque des Auteurs Ecclesiastiques du 17me. Siècle*: Tassin, *Hist. Litter de la Congregation de St. Maur*: Niceron, *Memoires*, t. xxi; Le Cerf *Bibliothèque Historique et Critique*: Moreri, *Diction. Historique*: Journal des Savant, Feb. 1678, &c. &c.

(1) I am not aware that so much can be said of the Jesuits. See Father Prout's splendid defence of the Jesuits, in which the same admission is made. (Relics of Father Prout). Suarez perhaps comes nearest to our idea of a philosopher. Hooker (*Ecclesiastical Polity*) is in many places only a translation of Suarez' *De Legibus*. I do not, of course, refer here to the scholastic philosophy in which the Jesuits were very strong.

Francis Lami, a scion of a noble race, was born at Montereau in 1636. Like Montfaucon, he first embraced the profession of arms, and, like him also, he soon relinquished a career in which his birth and personal merits might have secured to him the highest honors. "There is a destiny that shapes our ends," and the destiny of Lami was to wield the pen, not the sword.

"After having borne arms in the service of the king," says Dupin, "Lami, a gentleman by birth, enlisted in the "Benedictine ranks, in order to serve Jesus Christ." This event occurred, at the Abbey of St. Remy, in June, 1659, in the 23rd year of his age. He was soon appointed professor of philosophy, in which, like his friend and correspondent, Bossuet, he declared himself a disciple of Des Cartes. His faith in his illustrious master was unswerving and absolute, and he therefore asserted, on all occasions, the right of reason to decide boldly on all questions, within her own province. But he carefully avoided applying this principle to things sacred, and he clearly saw the dangers with which, in irreverent hands, the famous "methodic doubt" of Des Cartes might become pregnant. His lectures appear to have given satisfaction to his superiors, as we find that, in a Chapter General of the order, held in 1687, he was elevated to the dignity of Prior of Rebais. This post he held for three years, after which he resigned it probably because he felt the duties attached to it to be incompatible with his literary labours. In 1690, we find him an inmate of the royal Abbey of St. Denis, near Paris, in which he spent the rest of his days. Here he soon distinguished himself, not only by the character of his philosophical speculations, but by the grace and finish of his style. He appears to have written entirely in his native language, of which he was a perfect master, though his style (as Niceron and Le Cerf remark) is occasionally disfigured by traces of affectation. *Sed aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus.*



Like a true philosopher, he read little, but thought much. The book of nature lay before him ; to read that he needed not the spectacles of books.

The first fruits of his reflexions appeared in 1694. This was a treatise entitled "De la Connaissance de Soi-Même." The title (which resembles that of one of Bossuet's philosophical works) suggests the idea that the author accepted Pope's doctrine :

"The proper study of mankind is man : " but it was only a stepping-stone to a higher knowledge.

The work attracted some attention at the time, but is not much heard of now.

After having made man acquainted with himself, he next proceeds to acquaint him with God. This he did in his book, (published also in 1694) "La Verité evidente de la religion "Chrétienne." The work is a defence of the Christian religion against the objections of free-thinkers. The gist of the argument may be thus stated :

Whatever is approved of God is true.

Christianity is approved of God.

Ergo, &c,

His next work, a refutation of Spinoza, had a somewhat similar object. As Spinozism was famous in its day and as it still attracts many proselytes both in America and on the Continent, (1) I may be permitted to refer briefly to it here.

Baruch Spinoza, a Portuguese Jew, was born on the 24th of November, 1632, exactly four years before Lami. Like Lami, he was a devoted Cartesian, indeed it is one of the reproaches heaped on the memory of Des Cartes that his philosophy was the parent of Spinozism.

(1) See De Tocqueville, *De la Démocratie en Amérique*, and Guizot *L'Eglise et la société* en 1861. Fr. Lami's work on Spinozism was read by Bossuet in manuscript, and its publication strongly urged by the great prelate. It is

At an early age, Spinoza renounced Judaism, without, however, embracing Christianity. By this change, he gave mortal offence to the Jews, by whom he was in consequence incessantly persecuted. Like his master, Des Cartes, he was excessively delicate through life, and died in February, 1677, at the early age of 44. His chief work, "The Ethic," is posthumous.

Spinozism is founded on three fundamental notions, from which his conclusions are worked out with almost mathematical precision. These three principles are, substance, attribute, and mode. Substance he defines (with Des Cartes) to be that which exists *per se*, in other words, that which has an independent existence. That which exists *per se* is infinite: there is only one such substance—God. Besides the infinite substance, Des Cartes admits the existence of two finite substances, viz., spirit and matter. Here Spinoza differs from his master, and says that spirit and matter are not substances, but attributes. Finally, thought and extension, are the modes whose character it is to have no stability, but to be for ever fluctuating, undulating like the waves of the sea. Not only does he admit the existence of God, but he says that the highest knowledge is to know Him, the highest virtue to love Him. His system, usually styled Pantheism, has therefore been considered by some as one of the most complete monotheism ever presented to the world. By others, on the contrary, it has been denounced as rank atheism.

Of the latter was Fr. Lami, as the title of his work implies, "Le nouvel Athéisme renversé," the new atheism refuted. The book is divided into three parts. In the first he shews that Spinozism is alike condemned by reason and revelation. The second is a defence of the dogma of the Incarnation against the attacks of Spinoza. The third, is an elaborate highly spoken of by Bayle and Voltaire. See Bayle's Dictionary, article "Spinoza," and several of his letters: Voltaire, "Traité de la Métaphysique."

refutation "a priori" of Spinoza, by a close and continuous chain of reasoning, every link of which is a conclusion furnished by the principles previously laid down. Dupin (besides those already named) speaks highly of this achievement.

It was about this period that he published a small volume explanatory of a somewhat singular incident which arose out of a thunderstorm. It appears that the electric fluid struck the church of Lagni, and impressed an exact copy of the Canon of the Mass, on the altar cloth, the words of consecration being marked in red letters. The incident attracted great attention, and gave rise to many conjectures. The object of Lami's book is to shew that it was the result of purely natural causes.

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas !

In 1699 Lami was engaged in a controversy with an anonymous writer on the eternal subject of Grace, Free-Will, &c., in connection with the Benedictine edition of the writings of St. Augustin. This was one of the many disputes which arose out of the same subject. The battle threatened to be long and obstinate, but after many blows had been struck on both sides, the king interposed and stopped the further effusion of ink.

In 1704, Lami was involved in another controversy with a certain M. Gibert, a professor in the College of the Four Nations. The dispute here was of a purely literary kind, the question being was "Rhetoric useful." Unfortunately neither party attached the same meaning to the word "Rhetoric," hence the dispute was a "mere leap in the dark." "On this occasion, as on others of a similar kind," well remarks Nicéron, "it happened that each disputant attacked, not what his opponent had really said, but what he was *supposed* to have said." Gibert thought Lami attacked real eloquence, Lami thought Gibert wished to glorify

false eloquence. In a word, the whole affair was what logicians call an "ignoratio elenchi." The battle was so far remarkable that it engaged on the side of Gibert the heavy artillery of the Bishop of Soissons, "his lordship," says Le Cerf, "not deeming it beneath his dignity to fling himself into the *"mêlée."*

In 1706, Lami published his "Elements of the Sciences," and an "Essay on Logic." The first is purely metaphysical and treats of matter, mind, ideas, God, &c., &c.

In his "Logic," which he defines to be the "art of leading the mind to truth," he shews himself a thorough Cartesian. The true philosopher, he says, must divest himself of all prejudices and admit nothing which is not supported by the clearest evidence. Two years later he gave to the public eight letters on moral and theological subjects. In the four first, he addresses himself to the question, "ought one who has fallen into mortal sin make immediately an act of contrition?" To this, he answers "yes," and says he is ready to seal his conviction with his blood. His sincerity, however, was not destined to be exposed to so terrible a trial, and the apparent extravagance of his language exposed him to the ridicule of the critics.

In his fifth letter he examines the moral teaching of the pagan philosophers, on which he pronounces a sweeping condemnation. (1)

In the sixth, the most important of all, he dwells on the necessity of exterior observances in connection with religious matters.

The seventh, is an attempt to reconcile the sufferings with the beatitude of Christ. As God, He was always supremely happy; as man; he was on the cross, supremely miserable.

(1) On the moral short-comings of some even of the best pagans, see Bossuet, *Hist.*, Univ. Partie 2me. C. 16; and Dr. Döllinger's "Gentile and the Jew," t. I.

How are these opposite states to be reconciled? From this difficulty Lami extricates himself by a definition. What is beatitude? Beatitude is either the vision of God, or the love of God. Now our Lord had both of these on the cross, and at all times, in the highest degree. Therefore, in the midst of His sufferings, He was supremely happy. One can *believe* this, when proposed on competent authority; but it is not so *easy to understand* it. "De diis sanctius ac reverentius est credere quam scire," says Tacitus, and to do him justice, F. Lami seems dissatisfied with his own proof. (1)

The eighth, and last letter, has reference to certain duties and obligations of the religious life.

In 1710 he published a treatise on the connection of science and religion, the moral of which is that the most learned man is always the best Christian, a doctrine which Lord Bacon enforces in a well-known passage of his essays.

While these various works were issuing from the press, Fr. Lami carried on an extensive correspondence with Bossuet, Malebranche, Leibnitz, Du Puget, &c., on literary and philosophical subjects.

"Fr. Lami, "says Dupin, "won golden opinions of all men, by his rare gifts of mind, by the goodness of his heart, the purity of his morals, the regularity of his monastic exercises and his singular piety. By his application to study, he became an excellent philosopher, a sublime and polished writer, a man of sound judgment and a wondrous reader of the human heart."

Like Dr. Johnson, Fr. Lami was not only a profound thinker, he was also a fluent and most graceful speaker. He had a special talent for seizing upon the salient points of an

(1) St. Augustin also disapproved of these over-curious speculations which lead to no result; "the Divine nature" says the Saint "is best known by remaining unknown;" *Melius scitur Deus nesciendo.* De Ord. L. ii. C. 16.

Tacitus, De Mor. Ger. C. 34.

argument, and was gifted with the most brilliant conversational powers. Indeed he that could hold his own against him, in discussion, may think himself a fortunate man. Of this there is a striking instance on record. Fr. Lami paid a visit to La Trappe, about the time of the famous controversy on Monastic Studies between Mabillon and De Rancé. As this subject then formed the pivot round which, in many circles, conversation revolved, it naturally assumed a prominent place in the thoughts of these two distinguished men.

A discussion accordingly took place between them, on this topic, in presence of an audience at once numerous and select. De Rancé defended his views with his usual force and eloquence, but as a debater he was vastly inferior to Lami, to whom, therefore, the palm was unanimously assigned. Among those who subscribed to this verdict was the Duchess of Alençon, who, till then, had been on the side of the Abbot of La Trappe. (1)

Perhaps it would have been as well for Fr. Lami had he been less gifted in this respect. An ancient philosopher was once rallied on his great talent for silence. "I have often," said he, "regretted having spoken, never have I regretted "being silent." An admirable rule, doubtless, and one the wisdom of which Lami lived long enough to appreciate. At the period now referred to, however, he, like an intellectual knight-errant, was ready to tilt against all comers, in the field of discussion. In this way he raised against himself a host of adversaries, both in religious and scientific subjects.

In 1687, the minister, Jurieu (one of those little flies that are preserved in the amber of Bossuet's genius) opposed an assertion advanced by Malebranche, in his "*Recherche de la Verité*," to the effect that Jesus Christ supplied, by his satisfaction, whatever is wanting in the satisfaction offered

(1) See Mabillon's posthumous works, t. I. p. 376-7-8.

to God, by the damned, in their sufferings. Lami defends Malebranche who was perfectly well able to defend himself. Dissatisfied, however, with his performance, Fr. Lami consults Bossuet who suggests certain modifications. Lami recasts his defence of Malebranche, in which he proceeds by a kind of geometrical demonstration. Bossuet admires the method, but dissents from the conclusions. Fr. Lami is displeased with the freedom of Bossuet's remarks, on which he comments himself, with equal freedom, and continues his replies to other adversaries on the same subject. (1)

The history of this work of Malebranche's is somewhat singular. Fontenelle (2) tells us that the distinguished Oratorian, entering one day a bookseller's shop, found on the counter a copy of Des Cartes' "*Traité de l'homme*." This work, although the least esteemed of its author's writings, so entranced Father Malebranche that he was seized with a violent palpitation of the heart, which compelled him to lay down the volume. He had read enough, however, to penetrate the writer's meaning, and left the shop a confirmed Cartesian. He now devoted himself, with the greatest ardour, to the study of philosophy, and particularly, that of Des Cartes. The fruit of his studies appeared in 1614, in his famous "*Recherche de la Verité*." The publication of this book created a furore without a parallel in the history of letters. "Some books," says Bacon, "are to be tasted, others to be chewed, and a "third class to be swallowed and digested." Malebranche's book was tasted, chewed, devoured, and digested, all at once. The very title of the work, "*The Search after Truth*," had something piquant. So rapid was the sale that five successive editions were speedily exhausted. It was translated into the principal languages of Europe; there were two English

(1) See the whole of this subject treated in Dom Deforis' edition of Bossuet's works, vol. x.

(2) *Eloge de Malebranche*.

translations, one German, one Dutch, one Romäic, while the Abbé Lenfant translated it, for the learned of all countries, into Latin, under the title "De Inquirenda Veritate." It was read, re-read, and read again, by both friends and foes, for it met with both in numbers. Its object was to defend the Cartesian philosophy, to point out its harmony with revealed truth, and to show what a powerful engine it was for the discovery of fresh truths in the natural order. Des Cartes has, probably, never had an abler interpreter than Malebranche, "the Christian Plato, the angel of modern "philosophy," as M. Victor Cousin styles him. The "Search "after Truth," is, however, Cartesianism pushed to its remotest consequences, in other words it is Pantheism — Atheism. Against this imputation Malebranche protested vigorously but vainly. He declared that he anathematized Pantheism. But the question was not whether he advocated Pantheism "totidem verbis": it was simply this—do the principles which he lays down point inevitably to Pantheism? On this, two authorities, of very different stamp, arrived at the same conclusion. The Roman Index, and the French Sceptic have answered the question in the affirmative. (1)

Such was the book, one of whose propositions, attacked by Jurieu, Lami undertook to defend. But he was himself equally ready to attack another work of Malebranche's, viz., his "Traité de la Nature et de la Grâce." The publication of this work, in 1680, fell, like a bombshell, among the literary world, and roused against Malebranche the greatest men in France, including Bossuet and Arnauld. Bossuet's opinion on reading it was expressed in three words, "Pulchra, Nova, "Falsa" (it is beautiful, new, false). If Fr. Malebranche's first book led to Pantheism, his second, according to Bossuet,

(1) The book was condemned at Rome in 1709. See Voltaire *Traité de la Métaphysique*, Ch. 3.



led to pure Pelagianism. Before, however, tearing it in his powerful talons, the Eagle of Meaux solicited an interview with the author, and besought him to disavow the opinions which it contained. This Malebranche firmly but politely declined to do. "What then," exclaimed Bossuet, "do you want to compel me to attack you?" "My Lord," replied Malebranche, "I shall deem it an honour to break a lance with 'so illustrious an adversary.'" Those who know what manner of man Bossuet was, and how he was wont to bray his victims in the mortar of his crushing logic, cannot but admire the gallantry of Malebranche's reply, in accepting such a challenge.

The history of this famous literary duel, however, does not belong to the biography of our Benedictine. Fr. Lami had a quarrel of his own with Malebranche on the subject of this same "*Traité de la Nature et de la Grâce*." The dispute waxed warm; attacks, replies, and rejoinders were the order of the day, when suddenly Lami's superiors intervened, and imposed silence upon him. Malebranche was thus left in possession of the field.

Lami's combativeness, however, soon displayed itself in fresh discussions with Malebranche, Nicole, Arnauld, the Abbé Duguet, and Abbadie. The last-named person, Jacques Abbadie, a native of Nay, in Bearn, was a distinguished Protestant theologian and a philosopher of note. He was the intimate friend of Marshal Schomberg, by whom he was invited over to England, and on whose recommendation he was appointed dean of Killaloe, in Ireland:

In 1692 he published a work at Rotterdam, under the title of "*L'art de se connaître soi-même*."

This book was attacked by Lami and defended by Malebranche. All these disputes attracted great attention in their day; now they came upon us like the echo of some far dis-

tant land, whose sound we can hardly catch as it is faintly borne on the breeze.

Father Lami, as already remarked, carried on a regular correspondence with the most eminent men of his day, by whom, notwithstanding a certain vivacity, not to say sharpness, in the contents of his letters, he is always treated with the greatest regard and respect. One reason of this is perhaps to be found in the fact that Lami was "au fond" a man of a truly kind and gentle disposition. Of this we have a very convincing proof on record. Father Lami was not only an eminent metaphysician but a distinguished natural philosopher. In order to study the physical sciences to greater advantage, he had formed, with great trouble and at considerable expense, a collection of philosophical instruments. One day a cry of distress reaches his ears. It is a time of scarcity. The poor and their little ones want bread. Without a moment's hesitation, our worthy Benedictine sells his philosophical instruments and distributes the proceeds among the poor, thus making, in their favour, one of the greatest sacrifices that a man of science could make.

Father Lami, as already stated, resigned in 1690, his priory of Rebais, the duties of which he found to be incompatible with his literary labours. In the same year he withdrew to the royal Abbey of St. Denis, near Paris, where he spent the remainder of his days, and where he died on the 11th April, 1711, at the age of 75 years.

"He was, says Nicéron, "a man of distinguished ability; "a sincere friend, frank, impulsive, and an agreeable companion. He was an excellent philosopher, one who reflected much, but read little. His style is graceful, though it occasionally exhibits traces of affectation and bad taste." (1)

(1) *Memoires*, t. iii. See also Dupin, Tassin, *Le Cerf*, Moreri, &c., &c. On the history of Pantheism (which occupies so prominent a place in this chapter) the following may be consulted: the works of Saints Irenæus and

## DENIS DE SAINTE MARTHE.

DENIS DE SAINTE MARTHE was born at Paris, on the 24th May, 1650. Destined, from his tender years, for the Church, he, at the early age of eighteen, made his profession, as a Benedictine Monk, at the Abbey of Rennes. During eleven years, he professed philosophy and theology, in various houses of the order, and only gave up teaching in order to be promoted to the highest dignities which his brethren could bestow.

From 1690 he is successively prior of Tours, Rouen, Paris and St. Denis, and in 1720 he is elected Superior General.

France was then agitated by a religious ferment arising out of the condemnation of Jansenism, and many appealed from the Bull "Unigenitus" in which Pope Clement XI defined the faith of Church. Sainte Marthe was among the appellants, but he appears to have accepted the arrangement arrived at on this subject, in 1720.

Epiphanius; Jules Simon, *Hist. de l'école d'Alexandrie*; L'Abbé Maret, *Pantheisme dans les Sociétés Modernes*; Cousin, *Fragmens Philos*; Damiron, *Mem. sur l'éthique de Spinoza*, &c., &c. The Abbé Maret traces the history of this, the oldest of all philosophical errors, with great learning, and states with equal candour, the difficulties which surround the problem raised by Pantheism; the problem of all time and of all minds, since man first began to exercise his glorious prerogative of thought.

The difficulties are manifold, but they are all resolvable into one, "what are the "relations between the Infinite and the Finite?" "How does the Infinite include within itself and yet remain distinct from the Finite?" Of this famous problem, which, like another "Asian mystery" has bewildered so many minds, two and only two solutions are possible, viz. the Unitarian and the Dualistic.

The Unitarian attempts to solve the problem, by suppressing one of its conditions. For him, there exists but *one* substance, whether, like the pantheist, he style it the Infinite, or, like the Atheist, reduce it to the rank of the Finite.

The Dualist, on the other hand, recognizes the existence of *two* distinct kinds of substances, viz., the Infinite and the Finite.

This, it is scarcely necessary to say, is the Christian solution, and is, at once, the simplest, soundest, and most truly philosophical; for Christianity, enlightened, as it is, by a ray from on high, can alone securely fathom the dark depths of this mysterious subject.

Difficulties there doubtless are and shall be as long as man's intellectual vision shall remain limited within its present narrow range (I. Cor. xiii. 12); but if Truth must bend before difficulties, there is an end of all philosophy, as De Maistre observes (*Soirées de St. Petersburg*).

The works of Sainte Marthe are polemical, biographical, and historical. Of the first class, the best is perhaps his treatise on confession. "*Traité de la Confession contre les Calvinistes*," Paris, 1685, 8vo. It is a reply to a work of Daillé's, a Protestant minister of some note, to whom Bossuet has also done the honour of a refutation. He was a man of considerable learning, but whose motto (like that of Danton) seems to have been "*toujours de l'audace*," and who therefore often tries to compensate for the weakness of his proofs, by the boldness of his assertions. He wrote a book on "*The Right Use of the Fathers*," but, if M. Daillé is to be believed, the Fathers were of no use at all. With similar hardihood of assertion, he says, in his book on Confession, published at Geneva in 1661, that you can find the *Coran*, as easily as Confession, in the Scriptures!! Sainte Marthe's reply is at once doctrinal and historical, and constitutes a learned and exhaustive exposition of the Catholic teaching on this subject. In it, he shows that what the Church now holds, regarding confession, she has always held; he gives various Scriptural proofs and the texts of the Fathers, during the first twelve centuries, in reply to another reckless assertion of Daillé's, that there was no trace of the practice, in the annals of the early church. Sainte Marthe also defends the memory of Bellarmine, who was rather roughly handled by Daillé, and re-establishes Bellarmine's four arguments on confession—

1. From the antiquity of the practice.
2. From its great advantages.
3. From the repugnance of Nature, the surest guarantee that the practice was not (as Daillé asserts) a modern invention; but must have come down from the remotest antiquity and on the highest authority.
4. From the miracles which have illustrated the practice.

On the whole, this book of Sainte Marthe's deserves a careful and attentive study from all who would make themselves masters of this important subject.

Sainte Marthe's next work was suggested by the complaints expressed by the French Protestants at the hardships inflicted on them by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. This edict, issued by Henry IV., was simply an act of toleration, in favour of the Protestants. It was fully sanctioned by the two great ecclesiastics who so long presided over the destinies of France, Richelieu and Mazarin. It was revoked by Louis XIV. under circumstances which belong to French history. Sainte Marthe's book is entitled "*Réponse aux plaintes des protestants, touchant la prétendu persecution de France.*"

The author shows that many of these complaints are groundless or, at least, exaggerated, but his forte lies in the employment of the "*Tu quoque*" argument. If the Protestants suffer, it is they themselves that have cut the rod that strikes them. Their oracles, Luther, Calvin, Farel, Jurieu, have all admitted the right of the magistrate to use the sword against heretics. On this subject he quotes largely from Prynne, the well-known Puritan champion and author of a ponderous volume of 1,000 quarto pages. (1)

Prynne's philosophy is very simple; it may be summed up in two words; toleration for ourselves, the lash for all besides. Saint Marthe might have added two other names to his list of "*intolerants*," each infinitely more distinguished than that of Prynne. These are the names of Milton and Locke. Neither England's great poet, who has made a hero of the Devil, nor England's great philosopher, whose sympa-

(1) Pryme was a most voluminous writer; see the catalogue of his works in Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. 3; also some curious details in Disraeli's *Calamities of authors*.

Prynne's principal work is entitled *Histriomastix*; an account of it will be found in Lingard, *Hist. of Eng.*, vol. viii., and in the *Biog. Brit.*

thies embraced the world, had any bowels of mercy where a "Papist" was concerned. (1)

Enough, however, on this subject. Happily a gulf, wide as the world, now separates us from such men and such opinions. It has been said that Catholics are intolerant, and doubtless among Catholics, as among other bodies, many may be found who have faith in the "holy text of pike and gun," as an engine of conversion. But there is no necessary connexion between them. No Catholic need be more orthodox than St. Augustin, and he was certainly no persecutor. "Destroy errors," says the Saint, "but spare their authors." (2) Had Louis XIV. followed this excellent maxim we might have been spared many scenes over which humanity would willingly fling a veil, while France would have escaped the loss of some of her best and most industrious citizens.

In 1692, Sainte Marthe published a volume on the famous question of monastic studies, so learnedly debated between Mabillon and De Rancé. Whatever we may think of the goodness and piety of these two eminent men, there can be no doubt that this difference of opinion damaged charity in those who subsequently took part in it.

Fr. Sainte Marthe was among those who departed furthest from that spirit of peace and conciliation which ought to preside over such discussions. His letters to De Rancé are marked by a degree of vivacity and even of acerbity which is utterly indefensible. The friends of the Abbot of La Trappe, who were very powerful, determined that he should

(1) See Milton's "Areopagitica," and Locke's letters, styled somewhat ironically "Letters on Toleration."

(2) *Interficate errores, diligite homines*; and again, addressing the Manicheans, he says, *Illi in vos sæviant qui nesciunt cum quo labore verum inveniat*. *Ego autem qui diu multum que jactatus, &c.* An interesting account of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes is given by Cardinal Bausset in his *Life of Bossuet*. His eminence has not a single word to say in justification of that act. Bayle (*Nouvelles de la Repub. des let*) and Basnage (*Hist. des Savants*) tried to defend Calvin in the affair of Servetus, but they found the facts too strong for them and had to give up Calvin's cause as hopeless.

be avenged, and insisted on the humiliation of his assailant. The Benedictines had to yield to the pressure, and Sainte Marthe was condemned to atone for his indiscretion, by the surrender of his dignity of Prior of St. Julien. He was, in turn, attacked by Jean Baptiste Thiers, in his "*Apologie de l'Abbé de La Trappe.*" Thiers, whose name has already appeared in these pages, was a devoted partisan of Rancé, and returned Sainte Marthe's blows, with interest.

He concludes his book with the following complimentary remarks :—

"But we have said enough, my Rev. Father Sainte Marthe, "to make you enter into yourself and to dissipate that "good opinion which you have of your own little person."

In 1694, Sainte Marthe published his "*Life of Cassiodorus, Chancellor and Prime Minister of Theodoric the Great, and of many other kings of Italy: afterwards Abbot of Viviers; with an account of the lives of the "souvereigns whom he served, and remarks on his writings."*

It is in four books. The first, gives details as to the birth, education, and employment of Cassiodorus, up to the period of Theodoric's death. The second, contains the leading events in the following reigns and the labours of Cassiodorus to the time of his retirement from the world. The third book shews us Cassiodorus in his cell at Viviers, after having served so many monarchs, Theodoric, Thibault, Alaric, Amalasonta, Theodatus and Bellas, whose tragic fate he had witnessed. The Centuriators of Magdeburgh had accused Cassiodorus of being animated by unworthy motives in retiring from the world. Sainte Marthe replies, and fully vindicates the memory of Cassiodorus.

The fourth book is a learned critique of Cassiodorus' works, viz., his letters, his chronicle, his "*Treatise on the Soul,*" his "*Commentary on the Psalms,*" his "*Historia Tripartita,*"

and even his "History of the Goths." The original of the last named work has been lost, but we possess an excellent abridgment of it in Jornandes "De Rebus Geticis." Sainte Marthe gives us, as regards the last work of Cassiodorus, all the information that we are ever likely to obtain.

This "Life of Cassiodorus," is Sainte Marthe's best work. (1)

His "History of St. Gregory the Great" appeared, in 1597. In arrangement, it is similar to the last named work. It consists of four books. The first treats of the birth, education, and occupation of Gregory down to the period of his elevation to the Papal chair. In it, he proves, by several arguments, the authenticity of the saint's "Dialogues." He points out the importance of the work, and reminds the reader that Pope Zachary translated it into Greek, in the middle of the eighth century, and that it was subsequently translated into Arabic, for the benefit of the Saracens. The three following books give the various events in the pontificate of St. Gregory, and the catalogue of his works. In book the third, he presents us with the history of the Pontiff's relations with John the Faster, on the subject of the assumption by the latter, of the ambitious title of "Œcumenical patriarch." In this book he also defends the saint against two charges with which he has been frequently assailed. One is his praise of Brunehaud, Queen of Austrasia, represented by some to have been a very wicked woman : the other, his congratulation of the tyrant and usurper, Phocas, on his accession to the imperial throne.

These charges have been made the most of by the Centuriators of Magdeburgh, by Bayle, by Cave, by Gibbon, et hoc genus omne. Both are repelled by Sainte Marthe. A word on each of them.

(1) See the highly appreciative judgment of the Abbé Langlet, an excellent authority and one usually very chary of his praise : "Méthode pour étudier l'histoire," &c.



Brunehaud or Brunchilde, Queen of Austrasia, has been differently judged by different writers. In the eyes of one class, she is famous for her virtues; in those of the other, she is infamous for her vices. She is either a saint, on the one hand, or, on the other, that worst of all bad things, a wicked woman, "for the wickedness of woman is all evil."

It is quite clear that, if her detractors be right, St. Gregory was wrong in describing her as "endowed with every virtue under heaven." (1) The question then is, was Pope Gregory guilty of an act of inexcusable adulation, in thus extolling a wicked woman?

To this question, Sainte Marthe replies by proving from the best authorities, that Brunchilde was all that the Pontiff represented her to be—a pious queen, a good mother, a wise ruler.

It is certainly remarkable that the earliest of her detractors is separated from her by an interval of 100 years; a fact which speaks for itself. In the second place, the virtues and personal attractions of Brunehaud are celebrated, in terms of the most unqualified praise, by all contemporary writers, without a single exception. Such are Gregory of Tours (*Historia Francorum*), Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, and also a gentle poet, who successfully wooed the Muses, St. Gregory the Great, &c. To this I may add that all the great modern historians, who have investigated this subject, viz., Mariana, Du Tillet, Papire Masson, Paul Emile, Boccacio Pasquier, Cordemoi, Velli, Sismondi, Augustin Thierry, &c., &c. have completely and unanimously vindicated the memory of Brunehaud. (2)

(1) *Præ aliis gentibus, gentem Francorum asserimus felicem, quæ sic, bonis omnibus præditam, meruit habere reginam.* S. Greg. Mag. Ep. L. ii. 8.

(2) See particularly Sismondi's "*Histoire des Français*," t. i. c. 9, (the best we have, according to Guizot), and Aug. Thierry, "*Récit des temps Mérovingiens*." Mariana examines the matter in detail and thus sums up: "*Quede pues por cosa cierta, que Brunechilde fué buena Princesa.*" *Historia General de Espana*, t. iv. L. v. C. x. Brunchilde was Spanish, by birth.

In this matter therefore, the illustrious pontiff, may exclaim : " My hands are clean."

Can the same be said of his relations with Phocas ? Sainte Marthe answers " yes," and labours hard to prove the affirmative. Candidly speaking, however, it must be admitted that he has undertaken a very difficult task.

The tragic fate of the Emperor Maurice ; the sad spectacle of his youthful children butchered in cold blood before his eyes ; the " pious fraud," (as Gibbon styles it) of the nurse who would fain substitute one of her own, in order to save one of the imperial children ; the discovery of the " fraud" by the unhappy monarch, and finally his own execution, under the gaze of the tyrant, Phocas, all form one of the most touching episodes, in the history of the Byzantine Empire.(1)

It was to this same Phocas, who, to say the least, was not a very bright model of Christian perfection, that Pope Gregory wrote a letter of congratulation, in terms of the highest eulogy !

Explain it as we may, this is an unpleasant fact, which, by his enemies, has been converted into a rod to lash his memory with, and, in the path of his friends, has been a " stone of offence and a rock of scandal." (2)

(1) The event (which has been dramatized by Corneille, in his " Heraclius") is described at length by both the Eastern and Western historians. Of the latter, see Le Beau, *Hist. du Bas Empire*, t. x. (ed. de St. Martin), and Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Ch. 46.

(2) Take the following from Gibbon, as a mild specimen of what one school of writers have said on this subject : " As a subject and a Christian, it was the "duty of Gregory to acquiesce in the established government ; but the joyful "applause with which he salutes the fortune of the assassin has sullied with "indelible disgrace, the character of the saint." Gibbon, *loc cit.* The sentiments of Father Maimbourg may be gathered from the following passage on Phocas in his " *Hist. du Pontificat de St. Gregoire* ; "I'l n'y eût jamais de plus infame tyran, que ce malheureux homme, sans vertu, sans naissance, sans honneur, sans mérite, très mal fait de sa personne, furieusement laid, d'un regard affreux paraissant toujours en furie quand il parlait, ivrogne, lascif, brutal, sanguinaire, &c., &c." See, in the same sense, Montalembert, " *Moines d'Occident*."

Baronius, *Annal*, ad an 602, N. xii. proposes to show that Maurice was a bad man, and that Phocas merely "served him right."

A few years later Heraclius rendered a similar "service" to Phocas himself

Phocas was, however, an obedient son of the Roman Church (a fact which was probably reckoned in his favor) while Gregory may well exclaim :—

“Huic uni forsân potui succumbere culpæ!” (*Æn.* IV. 19).

This life of St. Gregory was afterwards translated into Latin, and inserted in the fourth tome of the Pontiff's works, published in 1705, by the Benedictines, under the supervision of Sainte Marthe.

Both were violently attacked in the anonymous romance entitled “The Adventures of Pomponius Atticus (attributed to the Abbé Prevost), in which Saint Marthe is very roughly handled. The censure is extreme, but, in the opinion of some of the most judicious critics, these works do not rank as high as other productions of the Benedictine pen.

Sainte Marthe's next and last work was his “*Gallia Christiana*,” a work which reminds us that he was a member of a family in which genius was hereditary, and which was equally distinguished for social rank and literary eminence. (1)

The work was commenced by the brothers Scévole and Louis de Sainte Marthe, and completed in 1656 by Peter Scévole, Abel and Nicholas de Sainte Marthe. It was well received in the learned world, but, notwithstanding its many merits, was unfortunately defective in several respects. A new edition was called for, but, such was the magnitude of the task, that no one was willing to undertake the labour. At length, in 1710, the hour and the man had come. In that year, was held an assembly of the French clergy, at which, among other topics, the propriety of preparing a new edition of the “*Gallia Christiana*” was discussed and decided on.

Bossuet, who denounces the conduct of Phocas as “detestable,” reviews this chapter of Byzantine history with his usual luminous brevity. *Hist. Univ. Patie* 1e., *Epoque* xi.

(1) See Deux Duradier, (*Bibliothèque du Poitou*), who gives the biographies of forty-five eminent men of this family. Moreri (*Diction, Hist.*) presents us with the genealogy of the Sainte Marthes.

The name of Denis De Sainte Marthe, the subject of this notice, at once suggested itself as that of the man to whom, by the double right of genius and of family traditions, the undertaking should be entrusted, and to him, with singular propriety, it was accordingly confided. The success of the Benedictine fully justified the choice of the assembly.

In the hands of Sainte Marthe, the work, while retaining its old title of "*Gallia Christiana*," was entirely recast both in matter and form. It is written in the Latin language and is an account of the lives of the Archbishops, Bishops, and Abbots of France, from the earliest periods. It is introduced by a learned preface from the pen of our author, in which he points out the importance and difficulty of the undertaking, pays a graceful tribute to the memory of his illustrious relatives who had initiated it, names the learned men who aided him, by their researches amid the best libraries of Europe, during a period of six years, and explains the plan and object of the work. (1)

The first volume appeared in 1715, in folio. In this and the four succeeding volumes which were published from 1720 to 1728, Saint Marthe had the principal part. After his death, the work was continued by the Benedictines, until it had reached to thirteen volumes, when the labours of these learned monks were forcibly terminated. It is therefore unfortunately incomplete, a fourteenth volume has been added by a late editor, but two or three more are still wanting. (2)

(1) *Quam arduum sit quod molimur, quamque difficiles nodos et pene Herculeos habeat probant frequentes lapsus fratrum Sammarthanorum, in sua Gallia Christiana, virorum scilicet illorum quorum doctrinam suscepit omnis orbis litterarius, quique, in illustranda nostra historiâ, sive sacra, sive profana, ætatem totam contriverant.*

*Quare minime mirum, inter tot eruditos, quibus floret Gallia, nullum ausum esse insigne hoc opus a mendis repurgare, &c., &c. Pref. ad Gallia Christiana.*

(2) The well-known bibliographer, Brunet, (an oracle on all that relates to the history of books), thus speaks of the "*Gallia Christiana*," *Cet ouvrage important est malheureusement resté imparfait, et il faudrait, au moins, trois volumes, pour le compléter. It is now very rare. A splendid copy of it may be seen in the library of the British Museum.*

The work is a most valuable contribution both to ecclesiastical history and ecclesiastical biography, and, as such, has always been highly esteemed by the learned. (1)

The eighth volume contains the biography of an eminent man whose name has already appeared in these pages, a man who played a prominent part in the events of his time, who was at once a politician, a philosopher and a bishop, the friend of Saints (Bernard and Thomas of Canterbury), of Kings (of France and England), of Popes (Eugenius 3rd, Anastasius 4th and Adrian 4th), and whose history connects him with the twelfth century annals of Rome, France, England and Ireland. I allude to John of Salisbury, of whom we have already heard something in connection with the life of Pope St. Gregory the Great. A few particulars regarding this distinguished man may therefore not be out of place here.

John of Salisbury was born at Salisbury, in 1110, and died bishop of Chartres in 1180. He studied at Paris, whither he seems to have been attracted by the fame of its university and the renown of Abelard, with which Europe was then ringing. On the recommendation of St. Bernard, he is appointed Secretary to Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, and subsequently enjoys the confidence of St. Thomas à Beckett, by whom he is entrusted with several important missions to Rome. In these different capacities, John acquitted himself with great tact, judgment and devotion. He now becomes (according to the expression of Peter of Blois) the "eye and right hand" of à Becket; he shares all the fortunes of the Archbishop, clings to him through all vicissitudes and dangers, and is even said to have been present and to have been wounded at the memorable tragedy in Canterbury Cathedral.

In 1176, John of Salisbury is appointed bishop of Chartres, and attributes his elevation to the merits of the murdered

(1) *Rari sunt, doctorum in grege, quibus Galliæ Christianæ non frequens*  
Præf ad vol. 14.

prelate, as appears from the style of several of his episcopal acts. (1)

Three years later, he assists at the Council of Lateran (11th Œcumenical), at which attended 302 bishops, both Eastern and Western, on the summons of Alexander III. The bishop of Chartres had an opportunity of meeting here two other prelates whose names (like his own) history has preserved. One was the celebrated William of Tyr, the other St. Laurence, Archbishop of Dublin. (2)

At Rome, John of Salisbury had been well received by the Pontiffs, Eugenius III, Anastatius IV, and Adrian IV, the last named being (like himself) an Englishman, the only Englishman that has ever ascended the Papal throne. At his interviews with these pontiffs, he pointed out, with great freedom, many abuses which, in his judgment, called aloud for reform.

He was also commissioned by King Henry II, to obtain from Adrian, the Bull authorizing the Norman invasion of Ireland. This he obtained and publicly read afterwards, on the landing of Henry at Waterford, presenting the King, at the same time, with a gold ring, in the Pontiff's name, as a sign of feudal investiture. (3)

As a philosopher and writer, John of Salisbury takes high rank. Leland styles him "*Omnem scientiæ orbem*," a whole world of learning. Fuller, in his "*Worthies*" passes a

(1) *Joannes, divina dignatione et meritis Sancti Thomæ, Carnotensis ecclesiæ minister humilis.*

(2) See Labb. *Annal des Conc*, who gives some curious details as to the history of the bishops present at this Council.

(3) *Summis etiam pontificibus carus fuit et notissimus, Eugenio tertio, et Adriano IVo., ut liquet ex libertate et fiducia quâ huic papæ ausus est exponere plurima curiæ Romanæ vitia . . . . . Henricus II. misit eum Romam, ad Adrianum papam IV. m., ad impetrandum occupandæ Hiberniæ privilegium, quod solemniter, in Synodo Guaterfordiensi recitavit, regique obtulit, summi pontificis nominé annulum aureum in signum investituræ. Gallia Christiana, t. viii.*

As regards Ireland, the account here given is substantially the same as that of Cambrensis. The Bull of Pope Adrian, that memorable act of Papal aggression, is given by Cambrensis and by Rymer.

similar judgment on him. As a philosopher his merits have been fully appreciated by Tenneman, Cousin, Hauréau, &c. John of Salisbury was a voluminous writer. To his pen we are indebted, *inter alia*, for the lives of St. Anselm and St. Thomas, for numerous letters of the highest interest, and particularly for his "Polycraticus, sive de Curialium nugis et 'vestigiiis philosophorum.'" It constitutes a lively, pungent satire on men and things, and, in this respect, it is quite unique. The only other work that can be compared to it is Cornelius Agrippa's "De Vanitate Scientiarum," which, however, only appeared in the sixteenth century.

It has also its serious side, and discusses the great question then present to all thoughts, viz., the relations of the spiritual and temporal powers. On this point John of Salisbury is what we would now call an "Ultramontane," and advocates, in the strongest language, the supremacy of Pontiffs over princes, not only in spirituals but in temporals.

This language was perhaps natural in a man who had just presented his sovereign with a new kingdom, as a gift in the name of a Roman Pontiff; a gift which that sovereign received, as such.

It is in this book also that he makes the singular charge against Pope Saint, Gregory the Great, of having pulled down certain monuments of ancient Rome. Of this, perhaps, enough has already been said in our memoir of the saint.

Those who may wish to know more of John of Salisbury and his writings are referred to the authorities named at foot. (1)

The "Gallia Christiana" was Sainte Marthe's last work. He did not long survive the completion of the fourth volume, having died at Paris on the 30th of March, 1725.

(1) Hist. Lit de la France, t. 14; Gallia Christiana, t. 8; Hauréau, De la Philos. Scholast., t. 1; Warton, Ang. Sac.; Tanner, Bibliotheca Britannico Hibernica, &c., &c.

“Those who knew Fr. Sainte Marthe,” says Niceron, “have always admired his gentleness, his modesty, his affability, and his governing talents.” (1)

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### EDMOND MARTÈNE

EDMOND MARTÈNE was born at St. Jean de Losne, near Dijon, on the 22nd December, 1654. The accident of his birth thus made him almost the fellow townsman of Bossuet and St. Bernard, both of whom first looked upon this “breathing world” of ours from beneath the shadow of the old walls of Burgundy’s ancient capital.

But though not destined to rival the glories of the Solitary of Clairvaux, or those of the Eagle of Meaux—“for, “take them all in all, when shall we look upon their like “again?”—Martène is entitled to an honourable place, in any record of the Benedictines. At the age of eighteen, he was “professed” in the Abbey of St. Remy, at Rheims, and from that period to the time of his death, in 1739, he devoted himself with great zeal and success to the interests of the Benedictine order, and the cause of learning and religion.

In the eyes of some shallow thinkers, the things suggested by the last two words are incompatible. Lord Bacon thought otherwise. “A little philosophy inclineth man’s mind to “Atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth minds about to “religion.” (2) Never was this truth more splendidly illus-

(1) See Dreux Duradier, *Biblioth. du Poitou*, t. v. Gall. Christ, t. 8; *Le Cerf*. Niceron, t. v. Moreri, &c.

(2) *Essay*. xvi. See also his *Meditationes Sacræ*, and *De Augmentis*, where the same idea is repeated.



trated than in the lives and labours of the Benedictines, not to speak of the long array of illustrious believers, outside the order, who, "in every age and every clime," have adorned the annals of the Church,

Martène tried his "prentice hand" as a commentator on the Rule of St. Benedict. Of this famous code, it may, with truth, be said that it is remarkable, beyond all others, for its clearness, simplicity, and practical good sense. And yet, whether it be owing to the inherent imperfections of language, or the mistakes of transcribers, certain it is that the occasional obscurities of the Benedictine rule were such as to render a little more light highly desirable.

To point out what was original and beautiful in this rule, to explain what was obscure, to supply what was defective, such were the self-imposed labours of Martène. How he has succeeded is best attested by the almost unanimous voice of the learned, which has placed his commentary above all others. (1) Calmet comes next, but Calmet seems to have been more successful in expounding the oracles of Divine, than the utterances of human, wisdom. Martène's Commentary is, at once, (as Dupin observes) moral, literal, and historical, exhibiting, side by side with the language of St. Benedict, the theory of the Fathers, and the practice of the most ancient religious. It is therefore justly esteemed for its learned and judicious criticisms. "Nothing," says Voltaire, "is more rare than a good, nothing more insupportable than a bad, critic. For a critic must be three things at once. He must be the author with whom he, for the time, identifies himself, he must be himself, for he can never lay aside his own individuality, and, finally, he must be the interpreter between the author and the public. (2) He must also guard against

(1) See Dupin, *Bibliothèque des Aut. eccles. du xviime. Siecle.* Montalembert, *Moines d'Occident*, &c.

(2) Voltaire, himself an experienced critic, was here nearer to the truth than Madame de Staël, who has said : *L'art est difficile, la critique est facile.*

the affectation, too common among critics, of seeming to be over wise, against which Swift has shot one of his telling little shafts :—

“As learned commentators view,  
In Homer, more than Homer knew.” (1)

In all these respects, Martène is irreproachable, and his “Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict” still holds its place, as “facile princeps.”

It appeared, in 1690, and was followed in somewhat rapid succession by a series of works, all having for their object the illustration of monastic, liturgical and ecclesiastical antiquities. In connection with all these subjects, Martène has left “foot-prints in the sands of time,” but I doubt whether they are sufficiently attractive to interest the general reader. (2)

In 1716, he published his “*Thesaurus Anecdotorum*,” in five folio volumes. This is not, as the name would seem to imply, a mere collection of anecdotes. It is also something vastly more important. It presents us with an immense number of original documents, diplomas, letters of princes and pontiffs (and particularly of the Avignon pontiffs) the Acts of several Councils, the doctrinal works of the Fathers and other ecclesiastical writers from the 4th to the 14th century.

One can readily understand the great historical value of such a work as this, when edited by a man of Martène’s learning and judgment, and we are therefore not surprised to find that there are few books more frequently referred to

(1) It is probably to some of these Homeric critics that Montesquieu alludes, in one of his lively *Lettres Persanes* : Un nombre infini de maîtres de langues, d’arts et de sciences enseignent ce qu’ils ne savent pas ; et ce talent est bien considerable car il ne faut pas beaucoup d’esprit pour montrer ce qu’on sait, mais il en faut infiniment pour enseigner ce qu’on ignore. Lettre L. viii.

(2) These works will be found amply described by Dupin (*loc. cit.*).

by those who would make themselves familiar with the ecclesiastical and general history of the middle ages. (1)

It was also in 1716, that he published his "Voyage Litteraire," or Classical Tour. This book gives an account of his journey through various countries of Europe, and is highly interesting. The journey was undertaken, in company with Fr. Durand, and at the request of the Congregation of St. Maur, in order to provide materials for Sainte Marthe's great work, the "Gallia Christiana." The result was eminently successful. Martène returned to France laden with the spoils of some of the finest libraries of Europe. These researches proved of immense value to Sainte Marthe, who gracefully acknowledges his obligations to his learned confrère, in the preface to the "Gallia Christiana."

In 1739, Martène contributed a volume to the annals of the Benedictine Order. It is vol. vi., and is the only one from his pen.

It was his last work. Martène had now passed through man's seven ages, and his footsteps were already wakening the echoes of the grave. He was in his eighty-fifth year, a good old age for a man who had done his share of brain-work. Death, the deliverer, was at hand, and, on the 20th June, 1739, our Benedictine calmly breathed his last.

Martène is not to be compared to Mabillon or Montfaucon. His place is among the Dii Minores of the Benedictine Pantheon. As a careful and judicious compiler, a patient inquirer, a skilful literary pioneer, he is entitled to a large measure of gratitude from all lovers of learning.

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See Dupin, *Biblioth. des auteurs ecclés.* du xvi.m. Siècle.

Tassin, *Hist. Lit. de Cong. de St. Maur.*

Moreri, *Diction., &c., &c.* Of Martène (as of many

(1) See Tassin, *Hist. Lit. de Congregation de St. Maur.*

other Benedictines) may well be said what Valerius Maximus has said of Varro, that their lives were, at once, the best proofs of human longevity, and the best examples of human virtue, and that labours so valuable as theirs were terminated only by the supreme stroke of Fate.

“ Terentius autem Varro, humanæ vitæ exemplum ætatis  
 “ que spatium nominandus, non annis, quibus sæculi tempus  
 “ æquavit, quam stylo vivacior fuit. In eodem enim lectulo,  
 “ et spiritus ejus et egregiorum operum cursus extinctus est.  
 “ L. viii. C. 7.”

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### THIERRI RUINART.

THIERRI RUINART was born, at Rheims, on the 10th June, 1657. Like many of his brethren, he was a scion of an ancient and honourable race, whose name is favourably known in French history. (1)

At the early age of seventeen, he bade adieu to the world, its pleasures and its honors, in order to be enrolled in the ranks of the Benedictine militia, into which he was admitted as a novice, in October, 1674, at the Abbey of St. Remi, at Rheims. His gentleness, piety, and love of learning, all marked him out as one worthy to wear the habit of this illustrious order. His profession took place in 1675, after which he seems to have given himself up completely to those

(1) Ruinart, in his correspondence, frequently refers to various members of his family. This family still exists in Champagne, where it has long possessed the estate of Brimont, near Rheims, and other property. In 1764, Claude Ruinart, Seigneur de Brimont married a lady bearing an historic name. This was Mademoiselle Du Coudray, sister of the celebrated defender of Marie Antoinette. His son, Ruinart de Brimont, represented Rheims, in the Chamber of Deputies, from 1820 to 1827. He has left many descendants, among whom may be noted Le Comte Arthur Ruinart de Brimont, for some time, Counsellor of the Cour des Comptes under the Imperial Government.

pious and learned labors which were the common inheritance of all the Benedictines. The bent of his mind carried him chiefly towards ecclesiastical history and patristic literature. His marked capacity for these departments of learning induced his superiors to associate him with Mabillon, who was then laying the foundations of a great fame, at the Abbey of St. Germain des Prés.

In 1682, Mabillon, who had just completed his fiftieth year, welcomed the youthful Benedictine, within the hospitable walls of this ancient Abbey. From that moment, a friendship which death alone terminated, sprang up between these eminent men. Mabillon taught Ruinart Greek, and became his "guide, philosopher and friend." The progress of the disciple fully responded to the zeal of the master, and for many years afterwards, both were associated in a community of labors, in which an identity of views and of objects, the "*idem velle atque idem nolle*," based on Christian charity, formed an indissoluble bond of friendship.

In 1689, Ruinart made his *début* in the literary world by a history of the first Christian Martyrs; "*Acta primorum martyrum sincera et selecta*." Of this book, Le Cerf says, "It contains the authentic acts of the martyrdom of the first Christians whom God animated with His spirit, and who during the first four centuries, sealed their faith with their blood. It is, after the Sacred Scriptures, one of the most precious and important of books. The work was justly esteemed for its good taste, and knowledge of antiquity, and has been frequently quoted by the highest authorities." (1)

In a learned preface, Ruinart explains the scope and plan of the work and, at the same time, refutes certain statements made by Dodwell. (2) The subject was one which had long

(1) Le Cerf, *Biblioth. Hist et crit. de la cong. de St. Maur.*

(2) Henry Dodwell, a well-known writer on ecclesiastical subjects, for which

been surrounded by a kind of legendary atmosphere, in which truth and falsehood were indiscriminately blended together. To separate these contradictory elements, and to dissipate by a few rays borrowed from the Sun of Truth, all the "clouds" "that lowered o'er" the subject, were the objects proposed to himself by Ruinart. These he attained by a calm, learned, and impartial examination of the facts, in which, however, he had the misfortune of displeasing, at once, two extreme parties, the minimizing Dodwells, on the one hand, and the lovers of legendary lore on the other. Of the latter, the Jesuits were the principal representatives, and by them Ruinart and Mabillon were both denounced as rationalists! This terrible epithet, however, had no terrors for the learned Benedictines, who calmly pursued their labours, determined to examine, in all the plenitude of reason, a subject which belonged exclusively to the domain of reason. The work was eminently successful, a fact amply attested by the numerous editions of it successively published in France, Germany, Italy, and Holland. (1)

Ruinart's next work was probably suggested by the preceding. It is entitled, "*Historia persecutionis Vandalicæ*," a history of the Vandalic persecution. The work is dedicated to Cardinal Furstemberg, and is of the greatest importance as regards the trials and general history of the early African church. Gibbon, who speaks highly of Ruinart's labour, in connection with this subject, says of the Vandalic persecutions

he, though a layman, had, like Gibbon, a wonderful taste, was born, at Dublin, in 1641, and educated at Trinity College, in that city. In the "Eleventh of his *Dissertationes Cyprianæ*," he endeavours to reduce the number of the early martyrs to an insignificant figure, and, by this statement, he offended both Catholics and Protestants alike. Burnet thus wrote to him on the subject: "Would a Vaninus, a Hobbes, or a Spinoza, say anything more derogatory to 'the glory of our most holy faith, than you write in these *Dissertationes*?'"

By Gibbon (*Miscellaneous Works*), Dodwell is described as a "man of immense learning." See his life in *Biog. Brit.*"

(1) This subject has been revived by Chateaubriand, in his great epic, "*Les Martyrs*."

of the fifth century. "The guilt of persecution may be imputed to Euric, King of the Visigoths, who suspended the exercise of ecclesiastical or, at least, of episcopal functions, and punished the popular bishops of Aquitaine, with imprisonment, exile, and confiscation. But the absurd and cruel enterprise of subduing the minds of a whole people was undertaken by the Vandals alone." (1)

One of the refined amusements of the Vandals consisted in cutting out the tongues of the Catholics. It does not, however, appear that those upon whom this operation was practised were always reduced to silence, as we find mention made of sixty confessors, who were thus tortured, and who yet spoke perfectly well, without tongues! (2)

In 1699, Ruinart published his splendid edition of the "*Historia Francorum*" of Gregory of Tours. Gregory of Tours, the Herodotus of early Gallic history, was born in Auvergne in 544, and died at Tours, in 595. He was of noble birth, of great energy and resolution, and ranks as a Saint in the Roman calendar. His "History" is of the highest importance, although his style, like that of most writers of the sixth century, is harsh and almost barbarous, a fact of which he himself is conscious, and which he admits, in language which betrays his supreme contempt for the refinements of grammarians. Gregory is a homely, illiterate, but keen observer, who naïvely relates, in barbarous Latin, facts of the highest interest which he himself had witnessed. The great charm of Gregory's work is its candour, which often amounts

(1) Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, C. 37. Gibbon's account is ample and impartial, but he evidently depends on Ruinart. Had Gibbon looked a little nearer home, he might have found *other* Vandals who undertook a similarly "absurd and cruel enterprise."

(2) See Victor Vitensis, *De Persec. Vand.* L. v. C. 6. Procop. *De Bell. Vand.* L. i. C. 8. S. Greg. Mag. Dial III. 32, and the philosopher Æneas Gazæus (in Theophrasto) who himself saw and heard them, and who is styled by Gibbon, "a cool, a learned and unexceptionable witness, without interest and without passion."

to indiscretion. He is a narrator full of boldness, who takes his reader completely into his confidence, and who describes and judges everything from the stand-point of his own strong personal feelings, thus furnishing us, at every page, with the most valuable information on men and things.

The preparation of this important work, for which he consulted all available manuscripts, and which he enriched with excellent notes, cost Ruinart two years' labour. His edition of Gregory is still the classic one, it has been reproduced by Dom Bouquet, in his great "Collection des Historiens de la France," by the Society of the History of France, and by the Abbé Migne, in his "Cursus Patrologiæ."

The next work of interest from the pen of Ruinart is an enquiry into the origin of the Archiepiscopal Pallium. On this subject two opinions have been held. According to one the pallium was an imperial, according to the other, it was a papal badge. It is the old question of pope or emperor, Guelph or Ghibelline. The first writer of note who adopts the imperialist view, in this matter, is Anthony de Dominis, who is followed by De Marca, the well-known author of the treatise "De Concordia Sacerdotii et Imperii." (1)

Baronius, on the other hand, advocates the papal origin of the pallium, but is unable to say whether it originated with Peter, Clement, or Linus. Ruinart reviews these opinions, examines their respective degrees of probability, and ends by expressing his agreement with that of Baronius. Yet it

(1) De Marca died on the eve of his elevation to the Archiepiscopal Chair of Paris, upon which, says Nicéron, some wag perpetrated the following grave joke :—

Ci git l'illustre De Marca,  
Que le plus grand des rois marqua,  
Pour le prélat de son église,  
Mais la mort qui le remarqua  
Et qui se plaît à la surprise  
Tout aussitôt le démarqua.

The life of De Marca will be found in the *Gallia Christiana*, t. i. and vii. the *Biog. Gen.*, &c.



may be doubted whether the weight of evidence be not on the whole, against Baronius. We possess, in the "Life of Augustus," by Suetonius, the clearest proof of the fact, that the pallium was originally a kind of mantle worn by the Greeks, and borrowed from them by the Romans, who in this, as in other matters, were constantly aping the Greeks. This opinion is confirmed by a passage in the "Life of Aurelian," by Vopiscus, and has been adopted by Montfaucon, who on such a subject, has every right to be respectfully heard. (1)

So much as regards the antiquarian aspect of the question upon which everyone is at liberty to form his own impressions.

"Si quid novisti rectius istis,  
Candidus imperti, sinon, his utere mecum." (2)

Ruinart's last work, a compendious life of Mabillon, was a tribute to the memory of his guide, philosopher and friend. It is styled an abridgment, and there is every reason to believe that he contemplated another, on a larger scale. It is certain that he spent his last days in collecting Mabillon's letters, and other materials of a similar kind. Had he been permitted to realize the intention which these labours suggest, we should probably know more of the private and purely personal history of Mabillon than we are now ever likely to learn. One important condition, however, failed him, without which learning and diligence are like vain and fruitless.

(1) See his "Antiquité Expliquée," t. ii. L. i. c. 3. Also Dr. Smith's Dict. of Greek and Roman Antiquit., Artic. Pallium. Dr. Smith confirms Montfaucon's view, and quotes a formidable array of authorities. Fortunately we possess two ancient monuments, which are worth a world of discussions, on this subject. One is the famous intaglio found, some years ago, at Perugia, and representing five heroes who fought against Thebes. It is now in the Museum at Berlin. The other is the splendid statue of Phocion, in the Vatican. The figures, in both cases, wear the Pallium.

(2) In modern times, the pallium is worn, among the Greeks, by *all* bishops; in the Western Church, by Popes, patriarchs, primates and archbishops only. Sometimes, however, it is granted by special favour to bishops, as in 1851, to the bishop of Marseilles. See Moroni, "Dizionario Ecclesiastico," and "Migne, "Diction d'Archéologie Chrétienne," artic Pallium.

In the midst of his literary gleanings in Champagne, he was himself mown down by that restless reaper whose name is Death, and who, according to the epitaph (just quoted) on De Marca, seems to delight in surprises.

Surprised, but not unprepared, Ruinart fell before the resistless scythe of this reaper, at the comparatively early age of 52 years. On the 27th of September, 1709, his eyes were closed, by the pious hands of his brethren of Hautvillers, and a day or two after, his remains were sadly, yet hopefully, consigned to an honoured grave, within their Abbey walls. There they still lie, awaiting the trumpet of Resurrection.

No reader of Gibbon needs to be told of the estimation in which the great historian held this distinguished Benedictine. In his account of the Vandalic persecutions, Gibbon places himself entirely in the hands of Ruinart, and he is right. For nowhere can he find a more reliable guide. What indeed would Gibbon be minus the Benedictines and Tillemont (*Hist. des Empereurs*)? For a more detailed account of Ruinart, see the works of Dupin, Tassin, Le Cerf, &c., already so often referred to: also an account of his life, by Dom René Massuet, prefixed to the fifth tome of the "*Acta Sanct. Ord. Sancti. Bened.*"

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#### AUGUSTIN CALMET.

AUGUSTIN CALMET, one of the most laborious and most learned of the Benedictines, and one, perhaps of all, the best known to English readers, was born at Mesnil-la-Horgne, in Lorraine, on the 26th February, 1672.

His first studies were pursued at the priory of Breuil, near Commercy, where he acquired that taste for retirement and study which gave a complexion to his whole future life. To such a man the calm and learned leisure of the Benedictine

cloister naturally presented great attractions, and we accordingly find that in October, 1688, he assumed the habit of the order, in the Abbey of St. Mansuy, at Toul; and that, a year later, he became "professed," in the same monastery. After this, we find him successively an inmate of the Abbeys of St. Sore, and Munster. At the latter place, he chanced, one day, to find a Hebrew grammar by Buxtorf and some Hebrew books. This discovery decided the current of Calmet's literary life. Aided by these slender resources, and profiting also by the assistance which he received from the protestant pastor of the district (Faber), Calmet soon made considerable progress in Hebrew, with the study of which he united that of Greek. He thus prepares himself for his great biblical labours.

After having received holy orders, at Halesheim, he was sent in 1696, to the Abbey of Moyen Moutier, where he devoted himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures. His proficiency in this and other branches of sacred learning was so great that he was soon raised from the position of a pupil to the rank of a master, in which capacity he professed philosophy and theology. The labours of the author, however, were not absorbed in the duties of the professor, and while he dispensed, to the young monks of Moyen Moutier, their intellectual pabulum, he also prepared to address himself to that large audience, the reading public, throughout the world. The fruit of his study was his famous commentary on the Bible. Uncertain whether he should publish this work or not, he proceeded to Paris in order to consult Mabillon and others. By their advice, he published it in French, an act of complaisance in which, says Feller, he displayed a little too much docility. The publication of this book exposed Calmet to the attacks of two eminent men, Richard Simon and Etienne Fourmont.

Simon, a priest of the Oratory, and author of a "Critical History of the Old and New Testaments," (1) is too well known to render any reference to him here necessary.

Fourmont, a man of mark in his day, is perhaps less known in ours. He was an eminent linguist and was the first to present Europe with a Chinese grammar. His acquaintance with Eastern languages gave him an advantage over Calmet whose knowledge of them was limited to Hebrew. Fourmont thought that Calmet had not paid sufficient attention to Rabbinical literature. The discussion had reached a certain stage, when it was suddenly extinguished by a decision of the king, who seems to have thought that grave interests were likely to be compromised by such a dispute. (2)

Fourmont being thus taken off his hands, Calmet was able to devote himself to the completion of his commentary and the preparation of his "History of the Old and New Testaments," which was intended to be the crowning of the edifice.

Meantime, his brethren, fully sensible of his great merits elected him successively to some of the highest dignities of the order.

In 1715, he was appointed Prior of Lay, near Nancy; in 1718, Abbot of St. Leopold, at Nancy; a year later he was raised to the rank of Visitor of his Congregation; and, in 1728, was invested with the government of the important Abbey of Senones, in Lorraine, where the remainder of his days was calmly passed, in exercises of piety and learned

(1) Dryden's "Religio Laici" was inspired by the English translation of this work. See the preface to the poem. In the opening lines, which are full of dignity, the poet, then a Protestant, completely separates himself from the rationalistic school of critics:—

Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars,  
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,  
Is reason to the soul.

(2) For an account of Fourmont's writings see Quérard, "La France Littéraire; Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions," t. i to xxii. *passim*, &c.

labours. Such was the estimation in which he was then held at Rome, that the Sovereign Pontiff, Benedict XIII. proposed to confer on him the title of Bishop, in partibus, with episcopal authority in all parts of his province which were exempt from the Ordinary's jurisdiction. This distinction Calmet, who prefers the calm of the cloister to the highest dignities of the Church, respectfully declines.

In 1754 Calmet had the honour of entertaining a distinguished and somewhat singular visitor, Voltaire, between whom and our present subject there had long existed the most friendly relations. The visit was projected in 1748, but only realised in 1754.

"I prefer," says Voltaire, "in his letter to Calmet, "retirement to the court, and great men to kings. I wish to learn in the society of one to whose writings I am indebted for whatever I know, and want to drink at the source. I shall become one of your monks. It will be Paul who visits Anthony."

Voltaire went to Senones, as promised, and remained there three weeks, during which he led a purely monastic life. He rose with the monks, joined in all their devotions, partook only of their simple fare, and, in all things, conformed to the discipline of the Abbey. Calmet, who knew that his guest subscribed to the Epicurean maxim, "*Les bonnes choses sont pour les bonnes gens*," had given orders that the choicest viands should be laid before his visitor. The latter, however, faithful to his three weeks' vow, politely declined to partake of any save the common fare. It happened that, during his stay at Senones, the festival of Corpus Christi came round, and was appropriately celebrated with great "pomp and circumstance." Voltaire assisted at the ceremony, took part in the procession, and throughout the whole proceedings (which were very long) displayed the

utmost attention and respect. (1) Voltaire did not lose his time at Senones. On the contrary, he amply profited by Calmet's conversation (which was brimful of learning), and by his library, which was very rich in almost all kinds of books. The philosopher of Ferney here made vigorous plunges in Patristic and generally in black letter literature. From this branch of study, however, he does not appear to have derived much benefit, if we may believe himself. On leaving Senones he proceeded to take the waters at Plombières, from which place he thus writes to a friend:—"I shall take the waters "as I have read the Fathers, without the least faith in them."

Certain it is that, in his "Histoire Generale" (intended as a reply to Bossuet's work on the same subject), and in his "Essai sur les mœurs," he borrows largely, and without any acknowledgment, from Calmet's "Histoire Universelle "Sacrée et Profane." So pleased was he with his visit to the Abbey that he contemplated returning there, and even spending the rest of his days within its venerable walls. The project was never realized. "Fancy a monk turned a poet!" says De Rancé, in his controversy with Mabillon. "Fancy "such a poet as Voltaire turned a monk," may we exclaim on reading that portion of his correspondence in which reference is made to this subject. Finally Voltaire composed the following lines in honour of his friend, which were afterwards placed beneath Calmet's portrait:—

"Des oracles Sacrés que Dieu daigna nous rendre,  
Son travail assidu perça l'obscurité,  
Il fit plus,—il les crut avec simplicité,  
Et fut, par ses vertus, digne de les entendre." (2)

These lines were written after Calmet's death, which occurred at the Abbey of Senones on the 20th October, 1757, at the age of 85.

(1) See Dom Fangé, "Vie de Calmet."

(2) Calmet was not the only ecclesiastic with whom Voltaire maintained friendly relations. He flew at higher game, and dedicated his "Mahomet" to

Calmet has left us many works, the bare list of which (as given by Dom Fangé) would fill many of these pages. I shall merely indicate the principal ones.

I have already referred to his commentary on the Old and New Testaments, a work which notwithstanding many defects, was and is highly esteemed.

His "*Histoire Ecclesiastique et Civile de la Lorraine*," is the first methodical work which we possess on the subject. It is exact and faithful, and is, in every sense, the production of a true savant. Calmet, however, sometimes forgets that excellent maxim, "*Rien de trop*." He is occasionally a little too diffuse.

But the work on which his fame chiefly rests is his great Dictionary of the Bible.

Two similar dictionaries had already appeared in French, one by Richard Simon, Curé of St. Uze (not to be confounded with another writer of the same name already referred to,) the other by Charles Huré. Both of these were works of merit, but both have been completely superseded by Calmet's labours in the same field.

Of Simon's work, M. Querard says that it was successful as long as no one contested with him the honours of victory; but when the star of Calmet beamed above the horizon, Simon was compelled to "pale his ineffectual fires." (1)

Yet Calmet admits (in his preface) his obligations to Simon, whose good qualities were often a guide, while his errors served as a beacon to warn others of the dangers that surrounded them.

Pope Benedict the XIV., in a letter in which he pays the Pontiff some very pretty compliments. Pope Benedict accepts, and bestows on the poet (as requested) his Apostolic Benediction. The correspondence (in Italian) between the poet and the pontiff will be found prefixed to "*Mahomet*," in Voltaire's works. Voltaire also wrote the following lines on Benedict:—

"Lambertinus hic est, Romæ decus et pater orbis,  
Qui mundum scriptis docuit, virtutibus ornat."

(1) Querard, "*La France Litteraire*."

When the Dictionary appeared Calmet was already in the zenith of his fame. His profound learning, attested by his numerous and important works, seemed to make of him a kind of oracle, on everything connected with Holy Writ.

The work was therefore well received everywhere, and was soon translated into Latin, English, German and Dutch. As soon, however, as the first gush of admiration had subsided, the critics, having applied their microscopes, began to detect certain flaws more or less serious, which detracted from the value of the work. Of these it was presently discovered that some were attributable to the unskilfulness of his collaborators, while others were fairly chargeable to the author himself.

"Nothing," says Voltaire (1), "is more useful than this "compilation of Biblical researches. The facts are correctly "stated, the quotations are faithful, he seldom thinks, but, by "bringing everything into the broad light of day, he supplies "ample food for reflection." No one partook more abundantly of this food than Voltaire, and no one, it must be added, more sadly abused it. This indeed is one of the regrettable features of the Dictionary, that by heaping up, with great industry, but with doubtful discretion, all manner of difficulties, which are frequently raised rather than resolved, Calmet has supplied the enemies of Revelation with weapons which they have not been slow to use. In this respect, the work was unlike the lance of Achilles, one end of which was said to heal the wounds inflicted by the other.

The curious learning of Calmet sometimes wounds, but does not always heal.

Add to this, that his style is singularly diffuse and inelegant, so much so that to read him is rather a duty than a pleasure. Great allowance, however, should be made on this

(1) Siècle de Louis XIV.



point, where there is question of learned, rather than of purely literary, works. M. l'Abbé James, Calmet's latest editor, has well remarked, "on lit Voltaire, mais on pille Calmet;" we read Voltaire, but we plunder Calmet. The plunder, it must be admitted, is well worth the trouble of loading ourselves with it; for Calmet, though he is more methodical than subtle, though his learning is more vast than select, and his criticism sometimes more minute than profound, yet remains an immense store-house of Biblical lore which, in France at least, has never been surpassed.

We have also from his pen a dissertation on the "Poetry and Music of the Hebrews," of which Dr. Burney, in his "History of Music," says it is as good as anything we possess on a subject shrouded in Cimmerian darkness. Calmet, in his old age, condescended to discuss such a subject as that of ghosts, apparitions, &c. It is to be regretted, in the interest of his fame, that he should have put his name to a book which, at every page, only too clearly shows that advancing years had stolen some of its vigour from a once noble intellect. (1)

The last production of Calmet's pen to which I shall allude is his epitaph, which is equally remarkable for its brevity, modesty, and simplicity:—

Frater Augustinus Calmet,  
Natione Gallus, religione Catholico-Romanus,  
Professione Monachus, nomine Abbas,  
Multum legit, scripsit, oravit,  
Utinam bene!

(1) It is worthy of note that St. Augustine has briefly touched on some at least of the subjects referred to by Calmet in the work now under consideration. See St. Aug. De Trinit., c. 9, and De Civ. Dei, c. 24. Love and ghosts are both banished from the modern world, for though everyone talks of them, nobody sees them.

"It is all very well," says a late popular writer (Hood), "that the sun should rise, that bread should rise, that the rising generation should rise, but that the *dead* should rise, merely to make one's hair rise, is, &c., &c."

On Calmet see Fangè, Vie de Calmet; his autobiography in the Bibliothèque Lorraine; Rathle, Geschichte der Geleherten; Ersch and Gruber, Algem, Encyclop., &c.











